THROUGH AN UNKNOWN ISLE

CHIPMAN

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A dozen or more natives were running towards them, weapons in hand
(Page 56)

THROUGH AN UNKNOWN ISLE

A STORY OF NEW GUINEA

BY

CHARLES P. CHIPMAN

AUTHOR OF

"THE LAST CRUISE OF THE ELECTRA"

"TWO BOYS AND A DOG," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

F. GILBERT EDGE

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE.

In the following pages I have endeavored to give, so far as is consistent with the character of the story, a truthful picture of conditions in the great unknown island—New Guinea. The fact that the knowledge of the island is so slight, and that customs differ widely in those regions which have been visited, has made the task most difficult. I believe, however, that I have in a measure succeeded in my attempt. Only in regard to the ruined city mentioned in the second part of the tale have I departed from well established fact, and I am sure that even there I keep well within the bounds of the possible.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following persons for valuable information contained in their accounts of what they saw and what they did in New Guinea:

W. D. Pitcairn, "Two Years Among the Savages of New Guinea."

Charles Lyne, "New Guinea," (London, 1885).

H. H. Romilly, "The Western Pacific and New Guinea," (London, 1887).

Mr. Lyne was Special Commissioner of the Sydney *Morning Herald* at the time of the establishment of the British protectorate over the southern portion of the island, and Mr. Romilly was for a number of years the British Special Commissioner for New Guinea.

CHARLES P. CHIPMAN.

Damariscotta, Me.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER.		PAGE.
I	Cast Up By the Sea	13
II	Ashore on New Guinea	27
III	A Night Alarm	41
IV	A Surprising Salutation	54
V	A Perilous Journey	70
VI	The Golden Lily	85
VII	An Appeal for Aid	100
VIII	An Unfortunate Encounter	115
IX	A Fruitless Search	128
X	Ketabu Makes Another Move	143
XI	A Serious Situation	156
XII	Ketabu's Triumph	172
XIII	Semessi's Vindication	183

PART II.

CHAPTER.		PAGE.
I	A Stern Chase	200
II	A Sad Experience	214
III	A Serious Mishap	230
IV	The Head Hunters	244
V	Deliverance and Danger	260
VI	Harrie's Discovery	275
VII	Capture and Escape	291
VIII	Lost Treasure	306
IX	A Fatal Mistake	320
X	Dark Days	334
XI.	All's Well That Ends Well	350

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

A dozen or more natives were running towards them, weapons in hand . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Along the dripping rocks, Semessi conducted them . . . 90

He saw the body of the aged priest lying prone upon the floor 180

"A sail! a sail!" he cried 270

THROUGH AN

UNKNOWN ISLE

A STORY OF NEW GUINEA

PART I

THE GOLDEN LILY

Through an Unknown Isle.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

CAST UP BY THE SEA.

THE sun came up out of a waveless sea into a cloudless sky. Below, the ocean lay in oily smoothness, dull yellow-green in color, unbroken save by the long and regular swell; above, the domed vault of heaven seemed brazen, and scarcely less glowing than the god of day himself.

Far out towards the western horizon a small, black speck rose and fell with the water upon which it rested. At first glance it seemed to be little more than a bit of drifting wreckage, but a closer look revealed it to be an open boat. With-

in it lay three outstretched forms, apparently lifeless.

As the sun mounted higher in his course, sending his burning rays down upon the upturned faces of the trio, they stirred uneasily, as if unpleasant dreams disturbed their slumbers, and presently they awoke, one by one, to sit up weakly, and stare off over the heaving sea with bloodshot eyes.

One of the three, a man of about forty-five, turned and addressed his companions, lads of about seventeen years each.

"It's the same old story, boys," he said in a voice that was harsh from thirst. "There's nothing to be seen—neither land, nor vessel. For one day more at least we must endure this torment. How are you feeling this morning?"

"Nicely, sir," came the response from both at once. "Thanks to your self-sacrifice we are suffering but little."

"How much water have we left, Leigh?" the first speaker now inquired.

The lad in the bow answered:

"A trifle more than two quarts, sir."

"And how many sea biscuits, Harrie?" the man went on.

The second youth bent over a small tin box before he replied.

"Twelve, father," he said at length.

"And this is our thirteenth day in the yawl, is it not?" came the query.

"Yes," Leigh returned, "and that makes it Sunday."

"I wonder where we will be when another Sabbath comes?" mused the man. "May the Lord grant that it be not in this boat!" Then rousing himself, he continued more cheerfully:

"Come, Harrie, pass out the crackers! We must eat our allowance now, before our appetites grow any larger."

The youth smiled faintly, and handed one of the hard cakes to each of his companions, taking a third for himself, while Leigh poured a few swallows of water from a wicker-covered demijohn into a small tin cup, which he set down upon the middle thwart, where all could reach it.

In silence the trio ate, dipping their biscuit into the cup to moisten them, for the dry food clung to their parched throats. When the last morsel had disappeared each in turn received a meagre draft of the precious fluid, and thus the meal closed.

Two weeks before the same party had partaken of their last breakfast on board the *Mayflower,* Dr. Thornton's sumptuous private yacht. The three—Dr. Edward Thornton, a wealthy specialist of San Francisco, his only son, Harrie, and Leigh Wilbur, the latter's room-mate,—were on an extensive tour among the islands of the western Pacific.

For several months they had been sailing hither and thither, touching now at this group, now at that, and all the time working to the south and west, until they were approaching the coast of that greatest, and least known, of all islands, New Guinea.

Thus far the voyage had been a most prosperous one, but on this eventful morning there came a change. Almost without warning a tem-

pest had arisen, and before any preparations could be made for weathering the gale, it was upon them. Right nobly did the *Mayflower* battle with the elements, seeming almost human in her struggle for existence. And, indeed, it seemed for a time that the little craft would win in the stubborn fight, when there came a bolt of lightning, striking the yacht directly over the engine-room, demolishing the machinery, killing the engineer, and setting fire to the wreckage.

In an instant all was confusion. Neither of the trio could recall how or when they launched and provisioned the yawl. They could only remember dimly that the larger of the two life boats was filled with the crew and pulled away from the burning vessel, while they tumbled hastily into their own frail refuge, and somehow got away before the *Mayflower* went down.

That the yawl outrode the storm was a miracle. For hours they battled with wind and wave, despairing of life, and expecting each moment to feel the waters closing about them. Yet

the passing of the tempest found them still afloat, though exhausted by the struggle. Nothing was ever seen of the other boat, and the castaways wondered little. Their own experience taught them the probable fate of their companions.

And now for thirteen days they had been drifting on beneath the tropic sun, hoping and fearing, looking for the rescue that never came. Gradually their small store of food and water had lessened, until they found themselves confronted by that most horrible of deaths, unless some speedy relief were forthcoming.

When the last drop of water had been drained from the tin cup, and it had been returned to its place beneath the forward thwart, the little group resumed their old attitude of listless, indifferent waiting. The time had passed when they could while away the hours in conversation.

The morning wore away in silence, save for an occasional exchange of low toned remarks between the youths. Shortly after noon, however, a change in the weather became noticeable.

The ocean no longer lay in the oily smoothness of intense calm, but a faint breeze rippled its surface into tiny wavelets. Even the drifting yawl felt the impetus, while to the castaways it was a most welcome relief from the monotony of previous days. Nor was it a mere passing flaw. Hourly the wind increased, until, by mid-afternoon, it was blowing fresh and strong from the northeast.

Harrie, noticing the impulse given to the boat by the breeze, took two of the oars and propped them upright just aft the forward thwart. Then he fastened to these improvised masts a blanket which lay in the bottom of the boat, extending it as far as the sticks would allow.

The advantage of this arrangement was immediately apparent, for the yawl moved through the water at quite a brisk pace. With a smile of satisfaction the lad walked to the stern, and seated himself at the tiller.

"We may as well get the full benefit of our sail," he remarked with some animation to his companions, who had watched his movements

with mild interest. "There's no telling what may come from a voyage of a few miles."

Leigh nodded with brightening eyes as he returned:

"It will at least give us something new to think about."

For the remainder of the day the little craft continued its advance, and when evening came the lads insisted upon taking turns as helmsman, steering by the stars, the direction having first been determined by means of a tiny compass attached to Leigh's watch chain. The wind held brisk all night, and when morning came the trio were overjoyed to see, far to the south, a long, dark line which they knew must be land.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" the youths shouted out at the sight. "Land at last! Land at last!"

Nor was Dr. Thornton less excited, though he was not so demonstrative in his delight. His eyes gleamed, his face lighted up, and his whole form took on new life.

The coast was too distant to be more than a low-lying bank upon the horizon, but the trio

feasted their eyes on its dim outline, and their hearts upon its promise of release from their cramped quarters.

"How far away is it? And how long will it take us to reach the shore?" eagerly questioned the lads.

"It is many miles off," the Doctor answered, "and I cannot say how soon we will reach it. Much depends on our breeze, you know. I hardly think we can count on landing to-day, however, even under the most favorable conditions."

And he was right. Though the wind continued fair all day, night fell while they were yet miles from the land. As they approached, however, they could see that the coast rose precipitously from the water's edge, while at some points it literally towered far into the heavens.

As darkness came on, a most beautiful sight presented itself. About the summits of the distant mountains a thunder storm was in progress, and the lightning, with its almost incessant flashes, lit up the inky masses of the hills for

brief intervals, only that they might vanish again into the gloom.

The electrical display served another, and more useful purpose as well. By that strange beacon the trio guided their little craft all through the night, and needed not a pilot to show them the way. When morning returned, they found themselves not more than three miles off shore, and a wondrous picture lay outstretched before them.

Right and left extended the coast, in an ever-varying line, far beyond the range of vision. Rugged and abrupt it rose from the sea, while inland so short a distance that they appeared almost to ascend directly from the waves, towered the lofty mountain ranges. Terrace on terrace they rose, now bright with waving grasses, now covered with the darker masses of forest, till their tops seemed to kiss the very clouds floating above them.

The castaways gazed spell-bound at the sight. At length Leigh inquired:

"What land is this?"

"It must be the northern coast of New Guinea," Dr. Thornton replied. "From our position before the disaster, and also from the wide extent of the shore, no other conclusion is possible."

"And that means—cannibals," remarked Harrie with a shrug of the shoulders. "I imagine we shall jump out of the frying pan into the fire."

"An uncertain evil is better than a known one, in this case at least," his father answered. "We are sure of death if we remain here in the yawl, while there is a possibility of life and ultimate rescue on shore."

The breeze still held stiff and fair, so that in another hour the boat was drawing near the land. Anxiously the trio scanned the forbidding line of cliffs for some harbor where they might find a landing place. But none appeared. The rocks rose grim and precipitous to a height of from twenty to fifty feet, while the snowy line of surf at their base told of death and danger to all who ventured near. Farther back the

towering mountains overshadowed all, their sides covered with the luxuriant verdure of the tropics.

"There's no chance for us to land here," said Harrie, after a long and careful inspection of the surf-beaten shore. "We must lower our sail, and row along until we come to some bay or inlet. Am I not right?"

"You are indeed," the Doctor returned. "And we must act at once, before we get too near those breakers yonder."

Accordingly the improvised masts were taken down, the blanket was removed, and the two lads took their places at the oars. They were so weakened from their long period of scanty diet, however, that they were able to make but slow progress. Wind and tide combined to carry them landward, while their own efforts advanced them somewhat in a lateral direction. Consequently the yawl approached the shore in a long, diagonal line.

They were already drawing dangerously near the foaming surf, while the beetling cliffs

seemed to extend on in unbroken solidity as far as the eye could see. Just at this juncture, when fear was fast taking hold upon the little party, a narrow opening among the boulders appeared, and towards this their craft was guided.

Passing between two lofty pinnacles, the trio found themselves within a landlocked bay of no great size, from whose shores the hills rose in mounds of emerald vegetation, while at their feet a scant margin of meadow was edged with a beach of glistening whiteness.

The surface of the inlet was dotted with numerous, tree-clad islets, between which the blue waters flowed in winding channels. An involuntary exclamation of admiration burst from the lips of all three as the scene opened before them, and the lads rested on their oars, allowing the boat to drift with the tide.

"Look yonder," called Leigh in a low voice, pointing off to the right, where in a tiny cove, overhung by a spur of the hill, was a cluster of

low, cone-shaped huts, built close down to the beach, which was lined with canoes.

His comrades gazed for a moment in silence. Then Dr. Thornton said in a whisper:

"Pull in between those two islands, boys! We don't want to be seen just yet!"

The lads nodded, and dipped their oars, sending the yawl around a jutting point of the nearest isle, which hid them from the village. As they continued on down the narrow channel which separated this bit of land from its neighbor, they congratulated themselves upon their successful maneuver. But before they had gone far the sound of paddles was heard, and the Doctor cried out:

"See there!"

Turning, the boys glanced over their shoulders to discover, coming towards them, two large canoes filled with hideous, naked savages.

CHAPTER II.

ASHORE ON NEW GUINEA.

At the moment when the castaways discovered the approaching savages, the latter for the first time perceived the yawl and its occupants. Immediately there was a commotion on board the canoes, which came to a sudden stop, while the natives eyed the strangers in wonder and alarm. The pause which ensued gave the trio an opportunity to inspect the other party.

The canoes were large logs, hollowed out, and rudely hewn at either end into grotesque shapes. In order to steady the narrow tree trunk there was at one side an out-rigger, formed of a smaller log, which was joined to the canoe proper by several transverse sticks. The outside of this crude craft was coated with slacked

lime, whose whiteness was relieved at short intervals by outlandish figures painted in a dull red.

Small poles, attached to the edges of the log with strips of rattan, served as gunwales, and these were decorated by a double row of white shells, while at bow and stern were slender uprights, surmounted by shells of a larger size, and from these uprights there fluttered narrow streamers of palm leaf.

Each of the canoes contained five naked forms, and a more hideous, repulsive set the lads had never seen. Their dark, copper-colored bodies, of medium size and well formed, were bare except for a narrow girdle of palm leaves. Their faces were smeared with a black, greasy substance, upon which were traced broad lines of red and white. Their heads were crowned with tremendous mops of hair, which stood straight up from the scalp in numerous separate tufts. A band of small shells and dogs' teeth surrounded the head just above the ears, and kept the hair from hanging down into the eyes.

The cartilage at the tip of the nose was perforated, and through the hole was thrust a long, round piece of shell, slightly curving, highly polished, and pointed at each end. The lobe of each ear was also pierced, and huge shell earrings were inserted in the openings.

All this the trio noted in the brief interval which elapsed before the natives recovered from their first astonishment. Then, as they once more resumed their paddles, the Doctor, calling to mind the peace sign mentioned to him by a friend, dipped his hand into the water, and, raising it above his head, sprinkled himself thoroughly. One man in the foremost canoe repeated his act, exclaiming inquiringly as he did so:

"Eliam? Eliam?" (Friend? Friend?)

Though quite ignorant of their meaning, the physician returned decidedly:

"Eliam! Eliam!"

Upon this the natives brought their canoes in beside the yawl, all the time jabbering excitedly to one another, and pointing towards the various

members of the little party. The boat especially seemed to excite their admiration, and elicited frequent cries of

"Wagga! Kausala, kausala!" (Canoe! Good, good!)

As the Americans made no hostile demonstration, but smiled in a friendly way, the newcomers speedily overcame their first fear, and presently two men leaped overboard, one from each canoe, and, swimming to the yawl, clambered over her side. Then at a command from the man in the bow of the nearer craft, the intruders dipped their paddles, which they had brought with them, sending the boat off up the channel, the other natives keeping close beside them.

The boys looked somewhat askance at this proceeding, but Dr. Thornton said in a low tone:

"We must make no resistance, lads. It would not only be useless, but might arouse the anger of the natives. We can only submit, and trust for an early opportunity to escape."

Down the narrow, winding passage between the two tree-clad islets the savages propelled

the yawl, and then on in the direction of the bay's head, passing in their course several more of the verdure clothed bits of land. As the flotilla advanced, the castaways saw, on a point near the upper extremity of the inlet, and backed by a grove of cocoanut trees, a second cluster of huts, and towards these the boats were headed.

As they neared the shore a number of smaller canoes, each containing one or two persons, put off and came to meet them. The newcomers seemed as greatly astonished at sight of the white men as had their companions, and a great hubbub ensued. The whole population of the village, a motley crowd of men, women and children, dogs and pigs, was drawn up on the beach to receive them.

When the castaways, at a sign from one of the men in the yawl, stepped out upon the sands, they were immediately surrounded by a curious, jabbering throng, who pinched them, pulled them, and punched them in a way which caused Harrie to exclaim:

"I say, let up on that, will you? I'm not made of sawdust, I'd have you know!"

While his words were unintelligible, the tone was not, and the natives fell back to a more respectful distance.

At this juncture an old man, whose face was painted a dirty white, with red stripes, and whose hair was ornamented with a row of bright red feathers, stepped forward. From his dress and air the trio deemed him to be the village chief. He turned to them with the same inquiry which the canoe-men had made:

"Eliam?"

Again the Doctor, who now had an inkling of the word's meaning, returned:

"Eliam!"

"Kuturi kowa?" (Will you sit down?) the old fellow queried next.

And the physician ventured to nod his head in assent.

The chief now turned and stalked across the beach toward the long row of huts, the cast-aways following closely. As they approached,

the dwellings, which from a distance presented a most picturesque appearance, lost some of their attractiveness. Each was built on a platform, raised on poles to a height of four or five feet. The sides were made of bark, and the rounding roof, which projected some distance over the flooring in front of the hut, or the side facing the sea, was covered with a thatch of palm leaves.

A double row of these primitive dwellings lined the edge of the beach, and their guide led them down the narrow street, if it deserved the name, to a building which stood at the extreme left of the line, and was somewhat larger than its fellows. A tall pole, rising from the roof, bore aloft a large shell, and gave to the house an air of distinction. Mounting to the platform by means of a rude ladder the old chief motioned for them to be seated on some mats which were spread in the shade of the overhanging roof.

The throng of villagers trooped along behind them, and now stood about the hut at a little distance, while a few of the older men

came up on the platform, where they held a low toned conversation with the chief. What the group were saying the trio could only conjecture, but they were confident that they were themselves the subject of the remarks.

The talk was presently interrupted by the arrival of a number of women, who bore in their hands large wooden trays of food, which they arranged on mats before the Americans. The old native and his comrades seated themselves around the banquet, facing the visitors, and immediately began to eat, using large flat spoons of cocoanut shell.

Seeing that they were expected to join in the meal, Dr. Thornton and the lads gingerly dipped their spoons into the nearest tray. The food proved to be clean and well cooked. There were yams, bananas, fish, and baked pig, besides several dishes with which they were unfamiliar. After their long period of fasting even this native fare seemed delicious, and the trio partook so heartily as to win the approval of their hosts.

When the repast was completed large bowls

filled with the fresh milk of the cocoanut were brought, and the castaways found the beverage a most agreeable and refreshing one.

The chief now tried to converse with his guests, but soon discovered that they could understand nothing that was said. He gave up the attempt, therefore, and, motioning for them to follow him, entered the hut. The castaways found themselves in a room which was entirely free from furnishings except a number of mats scattered about the floor. At either end a low opening served as both door and window. The interior was consequently but dimly lighted, and in the semi-darkness seemed hardly attractive.

By signs and words the old man gave the party to understand that they were to make themselves at home. Then he left them. As soon as their eyes became accustomed to the gloom, the lads looked about them. They saw that, while not overclean, the hut was habitable; but the air was so close and stifling that they were glad to escape to the platform outside.

The crowd had now gone back down the beach

to the spot where the yawl had been drawn up on the sands, and were giving it and its contents a thorough overhauling. The trio were alone, save for a couple of men who were squatted on the ground under one of the nearby huts.

As they seated themselves once more on the mats before the door, Harrie remarked:

"Well, father, we seem to be delivered from the deep sea, only to be given over to the tender mercies of these savages. How much better off are we than we were before?"

"Your question is a difficult one to answer," Dr. Thornton rejoined. "I will admit, however, that we are still in an unenviable situation. Without doubt we have come ashore at some point on the northern coast of New Guinea, but that doesn't help matters much. For this island is, as you know, nearly fifteen hundred miles long. There are, too, but few localities on the northern side which are visited by white men, and, judging from the conduct of our native captors, this is not one of those localities."

"Then how are we to reach home?" Leigh

questioned anxiously. "Will you attempt to cross to the southern side of the island?"

"Hardly," was the smiling reply. "That would involve a journey of from three to five hundred miles, according to the course we took, and it would be through one of the loftiest mountain ranges in the world. In addition to all that, the natives of the interior are said to be exceedingly hostile, and, so far as I am aware, no one has ever penetrated to any considerable distance from the coast."

"What are we to do, then?" asked the other lad a trifle impatiently. "Are we to remain here among these savages for the rest of our lives?"

"Certainly not," the physician answered. "We must, of course, make some effort to reach civilization once more. But it is a matter which must be weighed very carefully before we take action. And meanwhile it is best for us to cultivate the friendship of these dark-skinned villagers, and regain our lost strength. It would

be folly for us to attempt anything in our present weakened condition."

"Do you suppose there are cannibals hereabouts?" Harrie inquired.

"It's a question," was the response. "There are reports, based on the most trustworthy authority, of cannibal tribes in various parts of the island. Whether this region is one of their strongholds remains to be seen. I think, however, that the question need not concern us, for the present at least, as we are not now the most attractive food," and he glanced smilingly at the thin forms of the youths.

"I wonder if they are keeping watch on our movements?" said Leigh suddenly. "I've been looking at those fellows under that hut yonder for some time. They don't seem to be doing anything, but every moment or two they glance over this way."

Dr. Thornton eyed the men for some minutes in silence. Then he returned:

"I should not be surprised if they had been stationed there to see that we make no effort

to escape while the rest of the tribe are down at the boats. Well, let them watch. We don't care to leave just now, and when the time does come, we will find a way to go, guard or no guard."

For some time the trio sat without speaking. Before them stretched the placid waters of the bay, now a pale green, while here and there rose the tiny islets, clothed with the deeper green of the tropical vegetation. Back of all, the hills mounted skyward, their great, mound-like shapes standing out clearly against the soft blue of the sky.

Down the beach, which glittered snow-white in the sunlight, the canoes were drawn up in a dark line. The bodies of the natives, clustered about the yawl, blurred into indistinctness under the blinding glare, and their voices blended in a low toned murmur.

Suddenly there came a change in the peaceful scene. The throng on the beach scattered, while cries of fear or of rage rose shrill on the heat-laden air, mingled with the barking of number-

less dogs. The women and children ran, panic-stricken, for the shelter of the grove behind the village, while the men tore hither and thither, hastily gathering up their weapons.

At first the castaways could not understand this unexpected transformation. Then as they glanced out over the bay again, all became clear. There, not over a third of a mile away, and rapidly drawing nearer, were a half dozen large canoes, each holding eight or ten savages, in all their panoply of war.

CHAPTER III.

A NIGHT ALARM.

"That rather looks as if there was going to be trouble!" exclaimed Harrie, as they watched the oncoming fleet. "We seem to have landed right in the midst of a war cloud."

"It does have a rather serious look, that's a fact," his father returned gravely. "Coming as it does, so unexpectedly, the chances are that our own welfare is involved in the outcome."

"Why can't we run away while they are fighting?" suggested Leigh.

"Because the women and children would soon stop us," was the answer, "even if we were in a condition for roughing it in the bush, which we are not. No, we must stay here, and await the result."

"Our natives are ready for them!" called Harrie excitedly. "See, they are drawn up in battle array!"

His comrades glanced down the shore once more, to find that his words were true. The villagers, to the number of about seventy-five, had armed themselves, and were now drawn up in a double line, well back from the water's edge.

To the surprise of the castaways they made no attempt to oppose the landing of the hostile force, but contented themselves with shouting out defiance, meanwhile beating their spears against their shields. Each man, moreover, was executing a lively war dance of his own, so that the little army presented the appearance of a frenzied mob.

At the same time the enemy were singing their martial songs at the top of their voice, or hurling all manner of taunts at their foes on shore. As soon as the canoes touched the beach, the warriors leaped out upon the sands, and formed a line opposite the villagers, leaving one man on guard in each boat.

The Americans now expected to see the fight commence in earnest, but they were mistaken. The two opposing forces continued to howl, and dance, and clash their weapons, without making a forward move. The newcomers were slightly fewer in numbers, as could be seen now that they were drawn up in line, and the advantage seemed to be against them, since their surprise had failed of its purpose.

Suddenly a man rushed out from either band into the strip of neutral ground between. Instead of joining battle, however, these two warriors simply leaped about one another, shaking their spears threateningly, and continuing their boastful shouts. For several minutes this performance went on, and then the actors retired precipitately to their own ranks, while two of their comrades took their places.

In this way a dozen pairs exhibited themselves without coming to blows. Then, as another couple pranced out from the files, one hurled his spear at his adversary. The shot went wide of

the mark, but it was the signal for the combat to begin.

Instantly the air was full of flying weapons, while the warriors rushed at each other with the wildest fury. It seemed that the entire band must soon be annihilated, yet very few fell. Now and then a man would hobble out from the melee, disabled by a spear thrust, to be immediately cared for by some of the women, who rushed down and dragged the wounded one back to the edge of the beach.

For some minutes neither side gained perceptibly. But numbers slowly began to tell, and the attacked forced the attacking back toward the boats, inch by inch. Then the enemy broke in confusion, each man running pell-mell for his own canoe, while the villagers pressed hard after them, striking down all who lagged behind.

No sooner was one of the boats filled than it put off from the shore regardless of the fate of the rest. Four of the six canoes succeeded in escaping, and were soon out of sight behind the

nearest island. The other two were captured, and their crews quickly put to death.

Seeing that the combat was over, the women and children speedily left their hiding places, and trooped down upon the shore with cries of exultation. When they had inspected the dead, the females hastened back into the clustered huts, though for what purpose the trio could not conceive.

A group of men, among whom they recognized the old chief and the others who had dined with them, also returned up the narrow street, stopping when about half the distance at a stone platform which the castaways had noted on their own passage through the village earlier in the day. Here the natives were in full view of the Americans, who watched closely all that followed.

When the chief and his companions had taken their stand upon the stone flooring, which was raised somewhat above the level of the ground, the warriors left the beach, bearing the dead bodies of their conquered foes. Slowly they ad-

vanced up the street, and laid the corpses one by one at the feet of the waiting dignitaries. The latter regarded them gravely for a time, and then motioned silently to the waiting soldiers. Several stepped forward immediately, severed the heads from the prostrate forms, and scattered to their respective dwellings, where each proceeded to fasten his ghastly trophy above the doorway.

Meanwhile the women had taken possession of the headless trunks, and were sousing them with boiling water. The trio gazed for a moment or two in silence, not realizing the purpose of the natives. Then Harrie cried out with a shudder:

"Oh, horrors, father! They are getting ready to eat those men!" and he retreated precipitately to the interior of the hut, where his comrades quickly joined him.

And there the castaways remained for the rest of the day, in spite of the stifling heat and the numerous insect population, which rendered their stay anything but enjoyable. No one came

to disturb them, though just at nightfall two men brought their evening meal. They ate sparingly of the fruit and vegetables provided, but did not touch the trays of meat. When they had eaten, the dishes were removed, and they were again alone.

For the most part there was no conversation. The danger of their situation, and the horrible scene which they had witnessed, rendered all three silent and discouraged. Was it not a presage of their own fate? Was not escape impossible under such hopeless conditions? So they reasoned, while without arose the horrid shouts of the feasting savages. For three days the orgies continued, during which time they remained within their irksome prison. Once or twice they essayed to venture out at night, only to find a guard posted at either entrance, who sent them back inside.

On the fourth morning, however, the village had settled down to its normal condition once more, and the castaways were free to come and go as they pleased, so long as they did not wan-

der far from the hamlet. Any attempt to enter the forest was promptly repressed.

In their wanderings about the village the lads found that beyond the cocoanut grove, which was in the immediate rear of the huts, were the garden plots of the villagers, upon which they depended for their main food supply.

A large space of cleared ground was divided into numerous small patches, one of which was assigned to each family. These gardens were cared for entirely by the women, who raised in them the crops of yams and bananas.

One morning as they were strolling among the trees of the cocoanut plantation the lads chanced upon the native burial ground, and there had a rather exciting experience. Attracted by the sight of the numerous small enclosures, fenced about with slender, peeled saplings, or colored cords, the boys went nearer to investigate. They found that each little yard contained a single grave, about which were grouped the bows, arrows, shield, and spear of

the departed, together with dishes filled with food.

As they sauntered on through the primitive cemetery they chanced upon a mound about which, in addition to the usual fence, there was stretched a white cord. This line was attached to four tree trunks at a height of about five feet from the ground, and immediately attracted Leigh's attention.

"Why do you suppose they have put up that string?" he questioned, stepping forward for a closer look.

"Oh, it's some of their native superstition," Harrie replied. "You'd better come away, for if any one should see you, it might make trouble."

"Oh, I guess not," returned Leigh carelessly. "I want to see what's on that platform at the foot of the tree," and he went still nearer.

"Come away," warned his comrade, as he saw the other stoop down in order to pass under the string.

At that instant there was a sharp whirr, and

an arrow took Leigh's hat from his head. As the startled lad turned about to pick it up, a native jumped out from behind a nearby tree, brandishing aloft his spear, and shouting angrily:

"Nigere! nigere! Tabu! Kurau!" (No, no! Forbidden! Go away, go away!)

If the words were meaningless, the man's tone and gestures were not, and the frightened lads beat a hasty retreat, followed by the native, who continued to call "tabu, tabu," until they were back on the beach once more.

When they reported this incident to Dr. Thornton, on their return to the hut, he shook his head, looking disturbed.

"I don't know the significance of the strings about the grave," he said, "though I believe the word 'tabu' means 'sacred' or 'forbidden', and for one to trespass on such a spot would be a very serious crime in the eyes of the natives. You were fortunate to escape unharmed, but I am afraid the affair has not improved our

standing with our captors. We must be more careful in the future."

No change in the attitude of the natives was discovered, however, and as the castaways refrained from again approaching the burial ground, no harm came from the incident.

In passing to and fro among the houses the trio noticed that above the doorways there were rows of human skulls, and they soon observed that the dwellings which boasted the largest numbers of such decorations were those belonging to the leading men of the tribe. Evidently one's social standing depended not so much on wealth as upon the number of men one had slain.

There was another fact which caused them no little annoyance. This was the almost universal prevalence among the natives of a hideous skin disease. Many of the men and women would have been of pleasing appearance, had it not been that they were disfigured by this loathsome affliction, from which scarcely a person was free.

"I do wish these natives weren't quite so free to put their hands on us," Harrie complained one day. "They are such inquisitive creatures, and can't come near you without feeling of your clothes, your skin, and your hair. I'm afraid every time they touch me that I shall get their horrid humor."

"It is disagreeable," his father admitted. "But I believe that there will be little danger to us, so long as we are cleanly ourselves. We can do nothing except to exercise scrupulous care. If we had a cake or two of sulphur soap, I should not have the least fear. As it is, we will hope to escape contagion."

So a couple of weeks passed. The castaways found their position an irksome one, but as yet could not decide on a plan of escape. They knew that it would be almost an impossibility for them to succeed in crossing to the south side of the island, while the difficulties attendant upon a trip along the coast in the yawl were equally as great. In truth they scarcely knew which way to turn.

Meanwhile they were fast regaining their lost strength and flesh, and were once more in a condition to withstand hardship. They felt, therefore, that the time was at hand for them to act. But they were spared all further debate on the subject, and the decision was taken entirely out of their hands by an occurrence which fell upon the fifteenth night after their arrival in the village.

They had lain down as usual upon the pile of mats within their hut, to snatch such sleep as the fleas which infested the place would allow. The early hours of the night wore away without incident, and it was about two o'clock when suddenly they were aroused by the dull, rumbling sound of the great native drum which they had seen in the centre of the village. The next instant the still night air rang with the most unearthly shouts, accompanied by the hurried rush of feet.

CHAPTER IV.

A SURPRISING SALUTATION.

Jumping quickly to their feet the trio passed out upon the platform before the hut. The sky was overcast, and the whole village lay in the shadow. The wind came in fitful gusts from the water. Back among the mountains a thunder storm was in progress, and the heavens glowed intermittently with the lightning flashes, while the distant peals of thunder were faintly audible.

Nearer at hand a tempest of a different kind kind was raging—a storm of human passion and violence. Up the narrow street at the farther end of the hamlet arose the savage shouts of men, the terrrified shrieks of women and children, and the dull thud of weapons striking upon the soft flesh.

"It's a night attack!" whispered Dr. Thornton to the lads, as they stood listening to the uproar. "Doubtless a retaliation for the defeat inflicted on the former occasion."

"What shall we do?" asked Harrie anxiously. "Shall we escape to the woods?"

"I think not," his father replied. "It would hardly better our condition, for in the darkness we could not go far without losing our way, and we have no food or weapons to take with us. We may be entirely undisturbed here, too. We will not leave until we find it absolutely necessary."

Meanwhile the tumult increased. Dark forms could be seen stealing from nearby huts, and fleeing to the cover of the forest. The sound of fighting drew nearer. Evidently the villagers were being driven back down the street.

Suddenly a house at the other end of the row blazed out, throwing a lurid light upon the scene of the conflict. It revealed a confused mass of men struggling together near the stone pavement at the center of the village.

Another hut took fire. Two or three caught at once, and the light became dazzling. Thick clouds of smoke rolled in between the castaways and the fighting natives. When they cleared away, the retreat had become a rout. The panic stricken villagers were flying in all directions, while their frantic cries, the exulting shouts of the attacking party, and the crackling of the flames mingled in one medley of sound.

The upper half of the street was now one mass of flame, which drove even the victors before it. Hastily they plundered the houses which were yet untouched as they retreated. The glare from the burning dwellings lighted up the whole shore for a considerable distance. Suddenly Harrie pointed down the beach.

"See there!" he cried. "They mean to make thorough work of it, don't they?"

His comrades turned, to see a band of men busy demolishing the canoes, which lay in a long row at the water's edge.

"I think it is time we were leaving, even if

we go unprepared," was the physician's comment after a moment.

But even as he spoke there came a loud shout near at hand, and they saw that a dozen or more natives were running towards them, weapons in hand.

"It's too late to retreat! Draw your knives!" came Dr. Thornton's quick command. "We must make our last stand, boys. Be cool, and sell your life dear, with all your wounds in front. Steady!"

The band of warriors were now almost upon them, their spears uplifted for casting. The doctor and the two lads stepped out to the edge of the platform. As they did so the light from the burning village threw their forms out into bold relief. At the sight of the strange clothing and the white faces of the Americans the natives came to a sudden halt, their weapons dropping at their sides. A murmur of amazement ran from mouth to mouth, and they glanced at one another questioningly.

The Doctor was quick to make use of the mo-

mentary opportunity thus given him, and raising his hands above his head, called out:

"Eliam! Eliam!"

After a moment or two of hesitation one of the natives answered rather doubtfully, "Eliam." Then they held a brief consultation, after which two of their number hastened away, while the remainder stood watching the castaways.

"Put up your knives, and do nothing which will seem in the least hostile," the physician said warningly, in a whisper. The lads nodded quietly as they obeyed.

Presently the messengers returned accompanied by a third man, whom the trio deemed, from his head dress of brilliant feathers, to be the chief in command. He joined his men and talked with them for a short time. Then he advanced towards the platform uttering the native word for friend.

Again Dr. Thornton repeated his affirmation of friendship, whereupon the chief asked a question, but in a dialect totally different from that of the villagers. In reply the gentleman

shook his head vigorously and held out both his empty hands.

The native tried again, but met with no better success. Then he motioned for the castaways to descend to the ground. This they did, and advanced to meet the chief, who eyed them curiously. After a brief inspection he turned to his waiting men, and uttered a rapid order. Immediately six of the warriors stepped forward, and, seizing the hands of the trio, fastened them securely behind their backs.

So quickly was the order executed that before the castaways were aware of what was being done they were helpless. As the last knot was tied the commander signed for his prisoners to follow him, and led the way to the edge of the beach. Here he intimated by gestures that they were to sit down, and, leaving a guard to see that they did not escape, he returned with the rest of the men to the scene of activity.

By this time the flames had spread throughout the entire hamlet, and even the hut in which the trio had been quartered was burning. The

party on the beach had finished demolishing the canoes, and the work of destruction seemed complete. Yet the natives still lingered about the blazing dwellings, and it was not until the dawn was reddening the sky that the chief collected his forces for retreat.

They were a fine looking lot as they stood there in the growing light, nearly one hundred in number. Tall, finely formed, with smooth, copper-colored skin, thin lips, and a decidely Jewish cast of feature, they were a striking contrast to the villagers.

"These are not of the same tribe as the force which made the attack on the day of our arrival," Harrie remarked. "They are a much better looking set, and I should judge that they were more intelligent as well. See that young fellow yonder! His features are almost like those of a European."

"You are right," his father responded. "These men certainly seem to be of a superior grade. They must have come from some distance I suppose. Perhaps from the interior. I

have heard it said that inland tribes make periodical raids upon the coast villages."

"We shall soon have an opportunity of finding out," Leigh remarked. "For they are evidently intending to take us with them."

As he spoke the chief approached the trio, and signed for them to rise. Then he led them down to the shore, where his men were drawn up in a long line, two abreast. At a word of command three men stepped out from the ranks, and he motioned for the prisoners to take the vacant places. When this had been done the column was set in motion.

The sun was well above the horizon by this time, and shone brightly down on the scene of devastation and ruin, as the conquering force filed up through the cocoanut grove and on into the dense forest beyond. The well beaten path was barely wide enough to permit two persons to walk abreast. On either hand rose the stately trunks of the tropical trees. their branches meeting far above in a canopy which well-nigh obscured the sunlight, and made the long road-

way seem like an aisle in some vast cathedral.

Between the larger trees the undergrowth grew in such luxuriance as to form an impenetrable barrier. The edge of the path was lined with delicate ferns, and curious, mottled crotons, while numberless festoons of orchids swayed above their heads.

Through this wonderland the procession advanced at a brisk trot for a couple of hours. Then the forest suddenly ceased, and the path came out into a wide, rolling plain, covered with a tough, wiry grass, which reached to the knees. On the right was a narrow, swift-running river, whose bank the trail followed, while off to the south and the west were the masses of the mountain range, not over a dozen miles away.

All the morning the march was continued across the grass covered meadows, at a speed which taxed the endurance of the Americans to the utmost. The sun poured down his fiery rays upon their toiling forms, pitiless and scorching. Not a breath of air stirred the tops of the bushes which fringed the water course, and the trio

labored on perspiringly and in silence, too breathless and too discouraged to attempt to engage in conversation.

Ever towards the lofty mountains the advance continued, and by noon they were among the first spurs of the foot-hills. The castaways were now almost ready to drop from fatigue, and the leader of the natives, seeing their distress, halted his forces for an hour or more. Then, strengthened and refreshed by the rest, and by the simple food which was served to all, the march was resumed.

For the rest of the day the way wound upward among the hills, and progress was therefore less rapid. Sometimes the path led along the bank of a rushing mountain stream; again it lay deep down in some gloomy gorge, whose rocky sides rose sheer on either hand; yet again it ran beside the edge of a deep abyss, where far below they could faintly see the waving tree tops, and the glint of running waters.

When night came they had reached a secluded mountain valley, whose floor was clothed with a

carpet of living green, and through whose center a sparkling rivulet wound. Here, in the shelter of a tiny grove, camp was made, and the party prepared to spend the night.

Never had any couch seemed so soft and inviting as did the grassy mound upon which the castaways laid their weary bodies. Their captors freed their hands, evidently thinking they had come too far for the prisoners to attempt escape, and this was a most welcome relief.

At an early hour the following morning the journey was resumed, and then commenced a week of hardships such as the trio will never forget. For seven long days the march through the mountains was continued. During five of these the road was ever upward, and grew more and more difficult as they advanced.

Along narrow ledges the pathway led, where the column were obliged to walk single file, and where the slightest misstep would hurl the wayfarer thousands of feet down the mountain side. Through winding defiles it ran, where even the

light of day penetrated but dimly, so high above the beetling walls of rock extended.

On the second afternoon the company entered the region of the thunder storms, and every night thereafter they camped amid the roll of Titan artillery and a deluge from the skies. No fire was possible on these occasions, and though at that lofty altitude the nights were decidedly cool, the party were forced to huddle under the shelter of the cliffs and endure the chilling rain as best they could.

Five days the path led upwards. Then they crossed the divide, and began the descent upon the southern side. And if the ascent had been perilous, they found the downward road doubly so. Slipping and sliding, leaping from rock to rock, dislodging huge boulders which came thundering after them, in momentary danger of instant death, the trio toiled on. As for their native companions, they did not seem to find the road difficult, and pressed steadily forward with the utmost cheerfulness and good nature.

But there comes an end to all things, and at

last, late on the seventh afternoon, they came out upon the southern slope of the range, and not far from its base. At their feet a great tree-covered plain extended, dotted here and there with low hills, while far to the southwest there gleamed in the afternoon sunlight another mountain ridge.

Thus far the warrior band had conducted themselves as though in a friendly region. From the moment that they emerged from the last mountain defile into the forest clad plain, however, their manner underwent a radical change, and they marched as though in immediate expectation of attack.

Taking a course which led toward the distant range of hills in the southwest, they passed on at their best speed, scarcely pausing for meals, and when in camp one half of the force were kept on guard while the other half slept. Three days were passed in this way, and then they once more approached rising ground.

That the party was now nearing home the trio could readily see from their eager faces,

and by the additional speed they attained. Just as the sun was sinking behind the hills a sudden turn in the path brought them to a tall wooden palisade, before which the column came to an abrupt halt.

It was only for a moment. Then they filed through the narrow opening in the wall, which was guarded by a company of soldiers who greeted their returning friends with loud shouts. After a short distance had been traversed, a second palisade, higher and more stoutly built than the first, was encountered.

Passing this the roadway led up the hillside between impenetrable thickets of undergrowth, becoming more and more difficult and rugged until at length the ground was covered with large round stones, over which the trio stumbled in imminent danger of breaking their necks. Every dozen rods or so there was an abrupt turn, which ten men could have held against an army.

This path finally terminated against the side of a cliff thirty feet in height. Rude ladders

scaled this rocky rampart, and up them the natives swarmed. It was with some misgivings that the Americans essayed to climb when their turn came, but all succeeded in reaching the top in safety.

They were now upon a broad, rocky platform some twenty-five acres in extent, jutting out from the hillside, which rose sheer and forbidding in the rear, while on the other three sides there was an equally precipitous descent to the level of the plain below.

Built near the center of this impregnable plateau was a cluster of low, thatched huts, with high peaked roofs. They did not stand upon a raised platform, as in the case of the coast village, but upon the ground itself.

From these dwellings there now trooped forth an orderly company of natives, at whose head walked a tall, austere man, with a clear cut, intelligent face, and a commanding mien. The officer in charge of the returning soldiers advanced to meet him, and made a deferential report of some length.

The chief heard him through in silence. Then walking directly to the castaways, who stood somewhat apart from the others, he said in broken English:

"Welcome! Welcome! You glad welcome to Koapina!"

CHAPTER V.

A PERILOUS JOURNEY.

As THE old chief uttered his words of greeting, the trio stood lost in astonishment, wonder and bewilderment. That they should be accosted in their own tongue here in a portion of the world which they had every reason to believe had never before been visited by white men was incomprehensible. And the fact that it was a native who thus welcomed them was still more astounding.

There was a suspicion of a twinkle in the keen eyes of the stalwart savage as he noted their perplexity. He simply said, however:

"Me, Semessi. What name belong yours?"

By this time Dr. Thornton had sufficiently recovered himself to answer:

"I am Thornton; he is Harrie; and he is Leigh," pointing to himself and each of the lads in turn.

"Thornton - Harrie - Leigh," the native repeated slowly. "Yes, me 'member."

"But how does it happen that you speak English?" inquired the physician eagerly. "Have you ever been away among white men?"

Semessi shook his head gravely, but made no further reply.

"Where are we being taken?" persisted the gentleman. "Why have we been brought so far from the coast? Can you not tell us this?"

The chief's face remained impassive as he returned simply:

"Me no tell now. You soon see Dreldim Orynra. Then you know all why."

"Dreldim Orynra—what is that? Is it a man, a woman, or a thing? Where is it?" queried the American.

Semessi opened his mouth as if to speak, but closed it again without doing so. He glanced about him perplexedly for an instant, and then

pointed to a clump of flowers growing in a cleft of the rock a few rods away. The plants were tall and stately in form, each stalk being crowned with a large bell-shaped flower of a pale, golden yellow.

"What you say that?" he inquired.

"Why, I should call it a lily," Dr. Thornton responded. "A beautiful, golden lily."

"Yes," Semessi assented. "Dreldim Orynra —Golden Lily. That same. You see Golden Lily, then you know." Turning abruptly, he said in a different tone: "Come."

Wonderingly the trio followed him across the open space to the village, where he stopped before a small hut, and motioned for them to enter. With the brief command: "You stay here," he stalked away.

The castaways found themselves in a room that greatly resembled the one in which they had lived while among the coast natives. The floor was of hard-packed earth, however, instead of timber. In one corner was a pile of

mats, while near the center was a low, stool-like table on which stood a few earthen dishes.

As the form of the chief disappeared around a neighboring dwelling Harrie turned to his father inquiringly.

"Isn't this strange?" he began eagerly. "Didn't it seem odd to hear that old fellow talk in our language? How do you suppose he learned to speak it? And who do you think this Golden Lily he spoke of is?"

His father smiled. "You must remember, my son, that I am just as much at loss as you are," was his response. "I had no idea that travelers had ever penetrated to this distance from the northern shore, and even if they had done so, it would not explain this Semessi's familiarity with our tongue. While he speaks very brokenly he appears to understand all I said.

"As to your second theory I can hardly frame an opinion. The Golden Lily must be a person of some importance in the tribe, and I should judge a woman, for the name would hardly be

applied to a man. But why we are being carried to her I cannot understand. It is all a mystery to me, and one to which I can find no clue."

"Isn't it possible that the chief has at some time been at settlements on the south coast, among the English and there learned the language?" inquired Leigh. "And that later on he returned to his own people?"

"Such an explanation is plausible," the physician admitted. "And yet the man has not the appearance of one who has been much among the influences of our civilization. Natives who have been at the settlements usually try to imitate the manners and dress of the white men, while this fellow is as representative an old heathen as we have seen. I can only repeat that it is very perplexing."

"Do you believe we have much farther to go?" Harrie asked. "He said we should see this Golden Lily soon. Do you think that means to-morrow, or within two or three days?"

"I cannot tell," Dr. Thornton returned. "We must wait for the events to answer these ques-

tions. It is beyond our abilities to foretell what is before us."

"I hope that we won't have any more mountain climbing to do," remarked Leigh. "I have had enough to last me for a long time."

"I agree with you there," his friend rejoined. "But there's one thing which has been bothering me ever since we crossed the mountains. That is, how are we to find our way back to the coast, if we succeed in escaping from our captors? It looks like a tremendous task to me."

"You are right," his father answered. "I have been thinking of the same difficulty. But we must not be discouraged at this early stage of affairs. Our best hope of returning home eventually rests in our keeping our courage fresh and unbroken. In any event we cannot escape at present."

"I should say not," exclaimed Leigh. "If the path by which we came is the only approach to this village, we may as well give up at once. I never saw a place so well guarded in my life.

They don't mean to be taken by surprise, as the poor fellows down on the bay were."

"That's where they show their superior intelligence," was Harrie's comment. "If those villagers had possessed some such a system of defense, we would not be here now."

Further conversation was prevented by the entrance of Semessi, accompanied by two women, bearing several bowls of steaming food. This they deposited on the little stand, and at a sign from the chief, withdrew.

"Eat," was the old native's laconic remark, pointing to the repast.

As they took their places on the ground around the table, Dr. Thornton turned to their host, asking:

"How long before we shall see your Golden Lily? Is it far to where she is?"

"See soon," was the brief reply. "Not far."

"Can't you tell us something more than that, Semessi?" Harrie questioned impulsively.

The chief shook his head and they were forced to be content with the scant information

already furnished. When they had finished eating the women were recalled and carried away the remnants of the meal. Semessi lingered for a short time longer, and then he, too, left them.

The trio were so worn from their long journey that they were glad to lie down upon the mats provided for that purpose, and almost immediately fell asleep. It was barely light when they awoke, but their breakfast was awaiting them. Scarcely had they eaten when the chief entered the room, and said:

"Come. We go see Golden Lily now."

The castaways followed out into the village and on the open plateau beyond. The sun shone dimly through a thin haze which rested upon the mountain top, and obscured the plain below. A short distance from the hamlet a dozen soldiers stood waiting. Placing his prisoners in the center of this group, Semessi stepped to their head and gave the command to march.

To the surprise of the Americans the party, instead of descending by the ladders to the

rocky cliffs below, advanced directly toward the precipitous mountain side at the rear of the platform. Passing around a thickly growing clump of bushes, they entered a yawning opening in the face of the cliff.

The transition from the sunlight to the intense darkness of the cavern was so sudden that the castaways for the moment were unable to distinguish their surrroundings. Then, as their eyes became more accustomed to the gloom, they saw that they were in a natural tunnel, whose rounding sides met just above their heads. The floor was smooth and level, and the walking good. For five minutes they marched on through the subterranean passage, when, turning a sharp corner, they emerged in a narrow ravine.

Up this they advanced for an hour or more, and then its two sides came together above their heads, enfolding them in darkness once more. At the end of this second tunnel the path followed a shelving ledge on the mountain side, winding in and out, and steadily rising.

At the close of another hour the trail led into a deep gorge between two towering mountain peaks, whose sides rose bare and forbidding, without a tree or bit of vegetation to relieve the deep grey masses of the rock. Gradually the walls of the gorge drew together, until they were barely twenty-five feet apart.

The path now left the mountain side, and swung out across the chasm upon a natural bridge of stone which extended to the face of the opposite cliff. This viaduct was scarcely twelve inches wide, while on either side were the frightful depths of the abyss, whose lower regions lay shrouded in gloom a thousand feet below.

Upon this bridge the foremost natives filed unconcernedly, while the three Americans followed with quaking hearts and dizzy brains. Foot by foot they advanced until they had reached the center. Then Harrie, who was in the rear of his two companions, saw Leigh sway uncertainly as though about to fall. The next

moment the lad sat down heavily astride the pathway and fell forward in a dead faint.

Fortunately Harrie, by a supreme effort, repressed the cry which sprang to his lips and stood immovable, waiting until his father had reached the other side of the gorge. At that moment Semessi, who was at the head of the column, and already some distance up the opposite mountain side, glanced back and saw the prostrate youth. Instantly he turned to his men, halted them by a word, and pressed past them to the point where Dr. Thornton was standing.

That gentleman had just discovered Leigh's perilous position, and was about to go to his aid, when the chief stopped him. Without a word the native pulled the physician back, and advanced along the narrow pathway to the boy. Then he picked up the limp form, deliberately turned, and retraced his steps to the Doctor's side.

"Boy's head weak," he remarked. "Me carry him." Whereupon he gave the command

to resume the march, and the company again moved on.

Three minutes more brought them to the end of the perilous path, and they rounded a spur of the mountain to come out upon a broad, grass-covered plateau of some extent. Here the chief gently deposited Leigh on the ground, while Dr. Thornton said feelingly:

"You have done a brave deed, Semessi, and one which we can never expect to repay. I want you to feel, however, that you have my sincerest gratitude and that of the lads as well."

The native nodded silently, though his eyes gleamed with satisfaction, and the physician gave his attention to the swooning boy. He had already regained consciousness, and was soon able to sit up. When his friends explained to him how the coolness and steady nerve of the chief had saved his life, Leigh turned and said with emotion:

"I don't know how I can thank you, sir, for saving my life. I was so dizzy that I could

hardly see the pathway. Ugh! It makes me shiver now to think of it!"

A quarter of an hour later the party were again in motion, this time across the level plateau. On all sides rose the lofty mountain peaks, some of them clothed with forests, others bare masses of the dark colored rock, while the summits of all were hidden by the fog.

As they left the plain at its southern edge they crossed a deep gully on a swaying bridge of rattan, which was suspended from two overhanging trees, one on either bank. Then the road lay along the face of the cliff once more, but upon a wide shelf which afforded ample footing for them to walk two abreast.

Shortly after noon the trio became conscious of a dull, roaring sound on ahead. As they advanced the noise increased in volume, until the very air seemed to throb and quiver with its intensity. Then a sudden turn brought them within sight of the fall. A wide sheet of water plunged from the mountain side in a glittering mass down into the valley below.

Seemingly this deluge fell directly across the pathway, and the Americans were beginning to wonder how they were to pass, when they found that the falling liquid cleared the ledge by several feet, leaving an unobstructed passage behind it. Along the dripping rocks, where the light came with a dim, greenish hue through the watery screen, almost deafened by the roar, Semessi conducted them, and out upon a gentle slope which led down into the valley which lay extended at their feet.

Here he stopped for a brief interval that they might take in the peaceful scene. Away to the west for nearly five miles the plain extended, bounded everywhere by precipitous cliffs of naked rock. Through its center wound a broad stream, fed by the cataract behind them. Open meadow and leafy forest alternated in pleasing contrast, while here and there were clustered groups of the curious native huts. Near the valley's center a larger collection of these dwellings could be seen, almost worthy of being

called a town. Towards this Semessi pointed, saying:

"See! Golden Lily there!"

The next moment the fog, which all the morning had hovered over the hill tops, rolled down and shrouded the whole scene in its vague folds.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOLDEN LILY.

"Come," said Semessi, and the column again moved forward.

Upon reaching the plain below, the path turned and followed the left bank of the stream. The veil of mist hung low, covering forest and meadow, and shutting in about the party like a wall. Yet the trio as they passed could see here and there the evidences of a numerous population. Once or twice they came to small villages, in which the huts were similar to those at the hamlet where they had spent the previous night. The gables were high and pointed, while between them the ridge pole took a sagging curve, which imparted a quaint look to the thatched structure.

Few people were astir in these places, and the fog prevented any attention from being called to the white men as they passed. It was three-quarters of an hour later that they drew near the larger town at the valley's center. On its outskirts Semessi left the beaten pathway, and led the Americans by a circuitous route to a building which stood at some distance from its nearest neighbor.

Here he left them, posting a guard at the door, though neither of the trio could see the necessity for the precaution.

"I don't see why he does that," said Leigh. "He certainly can't expect us to escape from the valley. We could never find our way to the coast if we were back at the first village, and I'm sure from here it is an impossibility. Don't you think so, Doctor?"

"It would be a most difficult undertaking, I admit," the gentleman made answer. "But under favorable conditions I believe that it could be done. We shall not care to attempt it in our present circumstances, however, and I

fail to see any reason for placing us under guard."

"Perhaps it is not so much to keep us from running away as it is to prevent the natives from disturbing us," suggested Harrie. "Semessi may have reasons for wishing to keep our presence in town a secret for the present."

"Possibly you are right," assented his father. "But in either case it matters little. Here we are, and here we are likely to remain, for some time at least. I must confess that our chances of escape seem to be rapidly diminishing. I never heard of a place which was quite so difficult of access as is this. The tribe who live here do not mean to be in danger of a visit from a hostile clan."

"It puzzles me to understand why they should go the long distance to the coast in order to destroy that one village. All they gained by it was a couple of dozen heads, and three prisoners," Harrie remarked thoughtfully. "It seems a very unaccountable proceeding."

"Indeed it does," Dr. Thornton returned. "I

have been striving to find some solution of the problem for several days, but it is just as perplexing as ever. Our only way to ascertain the cause is to keep our eyes and ears open. Have either of you boys been able to learn anything of the native tongue?"

"I've got hold of a few words, but not many," his son answered promptly. "There's been too much climbing to do for me to have any time for talking with the natives. I shall try to learn as much as I can now, however."

"Do so," the physician said heartily. "A knowledge of the language may prove invaluable to us later on. And we will also be gathering such information as to the extent and character of this valley as we may be able to secure. Though we are so far from the sea, and in so discouraging a situation, we must be planning and preparing for a return to the coast. We must not give up hope simply because of adverse circumstances."

"We don't seem to be much nearer our interview with the Golden Lily than we were this

morning," put in Leigh. "I am almost beginning to doubt the existence of such a person. I guess that Semessi is putting up some sort of a joke on us. He looks as if he might have a good deal of quiet fun in him."

"Patience, lads, patience," was Dr. Thornton's rejoinder. "You must not be in such a hurry. Time will reveal many of the things you wish to know, if only you can wait without fretting. I have considerable confidence in our friend the chief, in spite of your mischief."

And the gentleman's faith was to be fully vindicated in the ensuing weeks in a way of which neither he nor the lads had any idea.

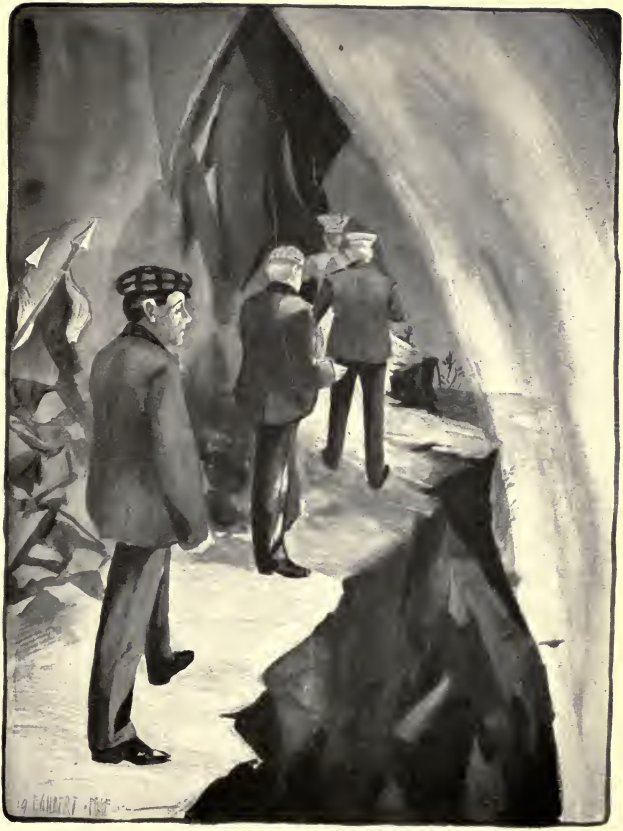
The day passed and night came without change in the condition of the prisoners. Their evening meal was brought in to them by the guard, who removed the dishes when they had eaten. Otherwise they were undisturbed. At an early hour they retired to the pile of mats in one corner of the hut, and were soon slumbering quietly.

Just after breakfast the following morning

the sentinel entered and signed for them to follow him. Outside the door a squad of armed men were in waiting, who fell in behind the trio, as they accompanied their guide into the town. As they walked on they saw that it consisted of several long rows of dwellings, extending back from the river at right angles, and crossed by other narrow streets which ran parallel with the stream.

The buildings were of the same rude type as those already seen, but, though on every hand were abundant traces of the native population, not a person was to be seen. The Americans wondered somewhat at this, but their thoughts were quickly turned to other matters.

Reaching the water side, the native led them a short distance down the stream, which parted, its two branches flowing so as to enclose a small circular island, whose level was several feet above that of the adjacent mainland. A high palisade ran about its edge, effectually shutting off the view. A bridge of timber spanned the left branch of the river, here not over forty feet



Along the dripping rocks, Semessi conducted them
(Page 81)

in width, but deep and swift, and across this the trio were conducted.

An opening in the wall admitted the party to the interior of the enclosure, and they now saw why the streets were deserted. From its outer rim the islet sloped sharply on all sides to the center, thus forming a natural amphitheater. Within this were gathered several thousand natives, who were sitting in orderly rows upon mats spread on the ground.

A broad aisle extended from the gateway to the open space in the center of the area, and at its opposite extremity there was a rude sort of pavilion. Towards this the Americans were led. Just before the canopy their guide halted them, and fell back among the guard behind.

The pavilion proved, upon closer inspection, to be but the porch of a low, square structure in its rear. The raised flooring was covered with a thick layer of mats, while in the center stood a rude couch, over which was thrown a covering of what the lads later on learned were kangaroo skins. Across the back of the plat-

form there hung a curtain of woven grasses, dyed a dull red.

Presently this curtain parted, and Semessi stepped forth, followed by a young girl whose advent the waiting audience greeted with loud shouts of "Dreldim Orynra! Dreldim Orynra!"

To the astonished Americans the maiden seemed a very vision of light. Tall and slender, she moved with a stately grace which was truly regal. Her face, pale and delicate, was almost angelic in its sweetness and purity. But her crowning glory was her hair. In great, yellow waves it enveloped head and shoulders, falling far below her waist. As she moved it caught and reflected the rays of the morning sun like molten gold.

Behind her came a second chieftain, much younger than Semessi, and decked out in the full native regalia, while the older man wore none of the savage finery except a head dress of feathers. Behind this gorgeous dignitary was a misshapen, hideous hunchback.

The young girl advanced to the couch and

took her place upon it, with Semessi on the right. His comrade stood at her left, while the dwarf crouched at her feet, his broad face contorted with horrible grimaces.

Certainly a stranger picture never man saw. In the center, the fair maid, her beautiful form enveloped in a yellow mist of hair, her eyes alight with excitement. At one side, the bronze face of the old chief, silhouetted against the dull red of the curtain, might have been that of some old Roman noble.

Upon the other hand the younger man stood, a very picture of savage manhood. A narrow girdle of grass encircled his waist. Armlets and anklets of various colored feathers were in striking contrast to the dark brown of his skin. About his neck were string after string of white shells, while his head dress shone with the bright plumage of a score of winged victims. From either ear hung immense rings of shell, while the nose bone was of large size and highly polished.

The grinning demon crouched at the foot of

the couch only enhanced the spiritual beauty of the girl above him, and added the finishing touch to the odd quartette.

In open eyed amazement the trio gazed. So this was the Golden Lily? Surely never sweeter flower grew, nor amid more unpromising surroundings. Never was a name better deserved. Thus the lads thought in the brief interval which elapsed between the entrance of the maid and the commencement of the hearing, for such it proved to be.

No sooner had the young queen taken her seat than Semessi stepped forward with uplifted hand, and addressed the assembly briefly. As he ceased speaking, the officer who had been in command of the raiding party stepped forward from a position behind the trio, and gave an account of the expedition, or so the Americans judged. Then the old chief took up the narrative once more, bringing the story down to their arrival in the town.

At the close there came a momentary hush. Then the maid rose and stepped to the edge of

the platform. Looking directly into the faces of the trio with eyes that shone with emotion she spoke in a voice of flute-like clearness.

"My brothers, you are welcome," she said. "Welcome to Koapina, welcome to the land of the Golden Lily. Though you came not of your own accord, you are none the less welcome, oh my brothers with the white faces. I, Dreldim Orynra, the Golden Lily, greet you in the name of my people. Our hearts and our homes are yours, my brothers. Freely we offer them to you.

"Though it be not our custom, and though it be not courteous to question guests of our tribe so soon after their arrival, yet I know that you will tell us, oh fair-skinned strangers, from whence you come, and how, and why. Let our hearts be open to one another, and let not evil thoughts come between us."

Dr. Thornton responded for himself and the lads, thanking the queen for her words of welcome, and in a few sentences explained how they came to be in the coast village at the time

of the raid by her forces. But he deemed it wiser to ask no questions as to the reason for bringing them inland, or as to their future. When he had done the girl said:

"It is well, my brother."

Then she turned and addressed the people at some length in the native tongue, evidently translating the doctor's remarks. While she was speaking Harrie noticed that a deep frown overspread the features of the young chief, though for what reason he could not surmise. The populace, however, seemed to be pleased, for a loud murmur of approval arose as she ceased.

Turning to Semessi the queen uttered a low remark. He stepped back and raised the curtain at the rear of the platform for her to pass. The two chiefs immediately followed, but the dwarf, grinning evilly, hopped to the ground and advanced until he stood directly in front of the Americans. Then he spat at them angrily, snarling out in the native speech:

"Dogs! White faced dogs!"

Before the trio had recovered from their surprise the guard came forward and conducted them back to their quarters. When they were again alone, Harrie drew a long breath as he turned to Leigh, asking:

"How about the Golden Lily now, old fellow? Do you still think Semessi was joking?"

"I give in," his friend returned. "Isn't she beautiful? And she does seem like a lily, too; the name just suits. But she can't be a native, can she, Doctor?" and he turned to the physician.

"I should say not, if there were any way to account for the presence of an English or an American girl here," was the reply. "For if not a native, she must be one of the other two. Yet I can't see how she speaks our language so well unless she is of our race. It is simply a greater mystery than ever."

"Isn't she fine, though?" Leigh went on, eagerly. "I never saw a girl who was so beautiful in my life! And what magnificent hair

she has! I don't wonder at the name they gave her."

"You'll be falling in love with her if you don't look out," laughed Harrie. "Don't you think it's a trifle presumptuous for a plain American citizen to aspire to the hand of a queen?"

"I guess a plain American citizen is the equal of any queen or king alive," his comrade returned stoutly. "And you know you think just the same as I do, only you're afraid to say so."

"But why do you suppose the hunchback vented his spite on us as he did?" queried Harrie, turning to his father. "We've never done him any harm."

"I can't see any reason for his act," the physician responded. "It may have been simply a freak of ill-nature. Dwarfs are notoriously cross."

"And I also noticed that the young chief seemed put out at the way in which the queen received us," the lad went on. "Perhaps he

saw in Leigh a dangerous rival," he added smilingly.

"It may prove a serious matter should he take a dislike to us," his father said gravely. "But we will trust no such misfortune will befall us."

For the remainder of the day the Americans were undisturbed. The lads used the opportunity in an attempt at conversation with their guard, but made no perceptible progress. It was not until the evening was well advanced that Semessi again called upon them. Then he appeared in the doorway and said:

"Come. You see Golden Lily now."

CHAPTER VII.

AN APPEAL FOR AID.

With conflicting emotions the trio followed the chief. The sentinel who had been posted at the door during the day had disappeared, and no one questioned their passage. The mist had again rolled down from the mountain peaks, and added to the darkness of the night. The various members of the party could barely distinguish one another's forms in the gloom, and it was only by keeping in close contact that they escaped separation.

The town was perfectly quiet, and not a soul was abroad in its narrow streets. Silently the column passed to the riverside, and on across the bridge to the scene of the morning's interview. Semessi led the prisoners around to the

western side of the square structure which stood behind the pavilion, and paused before a doorway.

A thick curtain of matting hung across the opening, through which came a few faint glimmerings of light. The chief listened for a moment, and then spoke in the native tongue. A voice within made answer, whereupon the old man lifted the portiere and said to his comrades:

"Go in."

Crossing the threshold the Americans found themselves in a large room whose wooden flooring was hidden by thick mats. A rough table stood near the center, and upon it there was a candlestick made of shell in which a small taper was burning. Its flickering rays revealed a number of rude stools and couches scattered about the apartment.

Beside this table the queen was standing, her radiant hair thrown back from her face, which was faintly flushed with excitement, while her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. As her

guests entered she stepped forward impulsively, saying in a voice which trembled with emotion:

"Once more I bid you welcome, and this time as friends, and those of my own race. Indeed, you can not realize what a joy it is to see a white face again after all these years."

Then, before the Doctor or his companions could reply, she went on:

"Please take seats—there are some stools right here by the table. That is right. Now we can talk, for, oh, there are so many things I want to ask you."

"And we shall be most happy to answer all your questions," the physician returned. "Though we have scarcely recovered as yet from our surprise at finding a person of Anglo-Saxon blood here among these wild men of New Guinea."

"I do not wonder," the maiden said quickly. "And so, before I hear you tell your story, I will relate my own to you." She paused an instant as though considering. Then she resumed:

"It is more than nine years since I first came

into this valley, and in all that time I have seen but one white face beside your own. But I will begin at the very beginning. My name is Mildred Raynor, and I was born in Connecticut. My father was a wealthy manufacturer of Bridgeport, and I was his only child.

"When I was about seven years of age my mother died. For a time my father was entirely prostrated by the blow, but at length he rallied. He was never quite the same man, however, and could not settle down to his business again. So he disposed of his mill interests, and started on a cruise in his yacht. Most men would have left a small daughter in some boarding school, but father would not be separated from me, and nurse and I accompanied him on his trip.

"For nearly a year he sailed aimlessly about the seas, never stopping for any length of time at one place, but always flitting, now here, now there. At last he reached Australia, and from there he came northward to New Guinea. He visited several of the Mission Stations estab

lished along the south coast, and finally arrived at Port Moresby, the seat of government of the British portion of the island.

"While there Maggie—my nurse, who was a young English girl—met Semessi. He had been taken prisoner by a tribe to the south of this valley, during a raid by his forces several years earlier, and had escaped from them to the coast. There he had remained, learning our language. Maggie became enamoured with the chief, who returned the affection, and she consented to accompany him back to his native place.

"But nurse was greatly attached to me, and could not bear the thought of parting with me. To overcome this objection Semessi suggested that I be taken with them. For some time Maggie resisted the temptation. At length she yielded, and they fled by night. Of the perils they encountered on their journey across the island I can not now tell, though nurse has recounted them to me many times.

"They finally succeeded in reaching the valley, to find it plunged deep in a civil strife. Two

chiefs were contending for the rule of the tribe. Semessi was also of chiefly rank, and desired to take his part in the contest. But Maggie suggested a truce, and that I be made the ruler, with Semessi and the rival chieftains as my guardians.

"The proposition met with instant approbation. Already the natives had called me the 'Golden Lily' because of a fancied resemblance to the flower which grows so profusely throughout the valley and nowhere else on the island. They all agreed that it was most fitting for me, the Golden Lily, to rule over the land of the golden lily. And so I was made queen.

"For a time I was merely a figurehead, and the ruling power was in the hands of the three chiefs. After a few years, however, one of them died. Then Maggie began to put me forward, insisting upon my presence at all the tribal meetings. I well remember how, the first time I appeared, I was frightened, and hid behind Semessi. That pleased the natives great-

ly, and I always had a part in their deliberations thereafter.

"As I grew older I tried to use my influence in behalf of peace and order, and with some little success. So the years went by. Then, only a year ago, Maggie died. Long before that she had come to realize how she had wronged both father and myself, and was striving to atone for it. Over and over she told me the story until sure that I had all the details correctly. Upon her dying bed she urged me to take the first opportunity, flee to the coast, and return to my own land.

"Meantime the second chief had died and his son, Ketabu, whom you saw with Semessi on the platform this morning, succeeded him. So long as Maggie lived my position was safe and pleasant enough. But no sooner was she gone than Ketabu began to annoy me with his attentions. Whether he really cares for me, or wishes to marry me simply as a means of obtaining supreme control, I can not say. In spite of my aversion for him he has persisted.

Semessi is good and kind, but he can not take Maggie's place, nor does he see any objection to my union with one of his own race. And why should he? But I had rather die than become the wife of Ketabu.

"Now that you have come, however, I know that I am safe. For you will protect me from the attentions of the young chief, and in time we can make our escape to the coast, I am sure. You will give me your assistance, will you not?"

"We most certainly will do all in our power to aid you, Miss Raynor," the physician returned heartily. "But I fear you overestimate our ability. You must remember that we are prisoners in a strange land."

"You forget," she interposed, "that we can count on Semessi for help. And please do not call me Miss Raynor; I would much rather be Mildred to you all."

"Very well," the gentleman said smilingly. "We will respect your wishes. Now that you have satisfied our curiosity, let us tell you about ourselves," and he gave a graphic account of

the adventures through which the trio had passed. At its close he inquired:

"Can you tell us how it happens that your warriors made the long journey to the coast simply to ravage the small villages there? It seems very inexplicable to us."

"It is not so strange as you may think," Mildred answered. "You see, long years ago this tribe lived down about the bay where you came ashore. They were prosperous and powerful, but a pestilence swept through their villages, and sadly reduced their numbers.

"A neighboring and rival tribe, which had long envied the continued prosperity of my people—for it seems natural for me to speak of them so—took advantage of this misfortune, and drove them inland. They finally reached this valley, a worn and tattered remnant, and the foe retired to settle on the ground they had won.

"Years passed on, and our clan prospered once more until they were more powerful than in the old days. The wound still rankled, however, and it has been our custom to send a picked

band of warriors to the coast once every two years, to plunder and ravage our ancient enemy. It is a tradition which I have been unable to alter.

"So successful has this policy proved that the village in which you were held and one other are all that remain of the tribe, and these two settlements are fast dying out. Our people, however, have become attached to this valley, where they are safe from all attack, and so have no thoughts of returning to the coast."

"How did you enter the valley?" inquired Harrie suddenly.

"By the path behind the falls," the young girl answered.

"Is there no other way of entrance?" asked the lad.

"None," was her reply.

"How does the river leave the plain?" continued her questioner.

"In the same way that it enters," Mildred returned; "it leaps down a cliff."

"But did you cross the narrow bridge of

stone where Leigh came so near falling?" Dr. Thornton now queried.

"No," was the answer. "Do you remember the lower plateau, where you stopped to attend your patient after his fainting fit?"

"Yes," the physician assented.

"Well," the queen went on, "there is a second pathway leading down from that plain to the southern side of this range. It is held by a picked garrison at its lower end, as is the one by which you came. Maggie and I entered the valley by that route."

"If we leave the valley, how are we to pass these guards?" Leigh questioned.

"I think Semessi would go with us as far as that," Mildred replied.

"But do you realize the difficulties and dangers which must be endured before we can reach the coast?" inquired Dr. Thornton.

"I think so," was the answer. "But anything will be better than to remain here where Ketabu can force his attentions upon me," and the girl shuddered.

"Will not the young chief prevent our departure?" was the physician's next remark.

"I hadn't thought of that," the young queen said in a startled tone. "No doubt he would try to do so if he knew of our intentions."

"Has he great influence among the people?" continued the gentleman. "Or is Semessi the leading chief?"

Mildred thought for a moment. "I believe that Ketabu is the most popular of late," she responded at last. "I had not thought of this before, but now that you have mentioned it, I can see that Semessi has been losing ground since Maggie died. Formerly he was almost supreme, and his word was all-powerful with the tribe. Now, however, the younger man holds an equal place with him, and I am not sure but a more influential one."

"Then I fear that Semessi's aid will not be sufficient to effect our escape," was the significant rejoinder. "You see, it is going to be a serious matter."

The girl's face fell, and her lip trembled a trifle as she said:

"I see. It all seemed so simple before, that I thought we had only to leave when we wished, since you were here. But you have opened my eyes."

"Understand me," Dr. Thornton hastened to remark. "I do not say this to discourage you, Mildred, but simply to help you to realize the seriousness of our situation. I believe we can escape to the coast in time, if we plan with care beforehand. We must not act too quickly, however, and plunge ourselves into unnecessary difficulties. You may rest assured that the lads and myself will use every means in our power to bring about your early release. We simply require time to weigh the matter in all its aspects."

"I thank you," was the simple response.

"May I ask you a question?" Harrie now inquired.

"Certainly," Mildred returned.

"How is it that you speak English so well,

after being here among these savages ever since you were a small child? I should think you would have forgotten all about it," said the youth.

"Maggie always talked with me in our own language," the queen replied. "She was a well educated woman for one in her station, and she taught me all she knew. Then, too, I had this," and she picked up a well-worn book which lay on the stand beside her, turning it so that the trio could see that it was a Bible. Then she went on reverently: "It has been my library ever since we came here, and my greatest comfort since nurse died. I do not know how I could have lived without it," and her voice trembled a trifle.

A silence fell on the little group. It was broken by Semessi, who lifted the curtain at the door and called out softly:

"Come. Must go now."

Dr. Thornton glanced at his watch. "It is after twelve," he exclaimed in surprise. "We must go, lads."

Promising to plan for an immediate departure, the trio took leave of the queen and followed Semessi out across the enclosure to the gateway. The fōg still hung low over the town, and the party reached the hut without meeting anyone. As the Americans were about to enter the doorway, Harrie stumbled over a dark body crouching near the entrance. As he picked himself up the lad heard a mocking laugh, and saw dimly through the gloom the misshapen form of the dwarf as he darted away.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER.

"HANIWANA!" exclaimed Semessi as the hunchback disappeared in the fog. "Me come back quick," he continued as he glided away after the fleeing dwarf.

The Americans entered their humble lodgings in some anxiety. The presence of the spy seemed to indicate that Ketabu was keeping a close watch over their movements. But why should he do that? They had done nothing to injure him in any way. Did he surmise the queen's plan, and was he guarding against its performance? Was he so bent on securing the supreme power in the tribe that he intended to remove all real or fancied obstacles from his path? Or was he simply jealous of the warm

welcome given the new-comers by Mildred, and therefore desirous of venting his ill-will upon them? Such were the thoughts which surged quickly through the minds of the trio as they groped their way across the room to the pile of mats in the farther corner. As they threw themselves down upon this hard couch Harrie said:

"I know considerably more now than I did this morning—or rather, yesterday, since it's long after midnight—but I can't say that the knowledge I've gained makes me feel any more satisfied with our situation."

"I agree with you," his father returned. "We have had all those seeming mysteries, which so perplexed us, explained, but in return we have a greatly increased responsibility."

"To think that the Golden Lily should prove to be from our own land!" put in Leigh. "It is wonderful! How her poor father must have suffered, though!"

"Leigh still seems to have no thought for anything except the queen," Harrie remarked.

"Don't lose your head, old chap, or we shall have you challenging Ketabu to mortal combat."

At this moment a footstep was heard outside, and presently Semessi entered. He approached the trio, saying in a low tone:

"Haniwana, him get away. Me not find. Ketabu send him. Ketabu bad man. We must watch him."

"Do you think there is any danger?" the Doctor questioned. "Will the young chief attack us, do you think?"

"Not soon. By and by, maybe. Me send man watch all time."

"That's all right, Semessi. We will see that Ketabu doesn't do us any harm," Harrie interposed. "You just keep your eye out that he don't hurt the Golden Lily."

"Yes. Me go now. Good-by," and the old chief left them.

"Who's thinking about the queen now?" remarked Leigh. "I guess I'm not the only one. But I move we leave this matter until morning

before we consider it further," he went on with a yawn. "I'm rather sleepy myself."

"Very well," assented his companions, and within ten minutes all three were sleeping soundly, in spite of the exciting incidents of the evening.

The next day, however, the physician again brought up the subject, saying to his comrades:

"As I said last night we have had a great responsibility thrust upon us by Mildred's request. Of course we must do all we can to bring about her release, as well as our own, and I am more than willing to do so. But it complicates the affair decidedly to have her desire to go with us. It would be hard enough for us to make our escape under the most favorable circumstances. Add to this the presence of a young girl in our party, and a probable watch on all our doings, and you have a problem calculated to stagger one from the very beginning."

"Do you believe Ketabu would try to prevent our departure?" Leigh questioned.

"If Mildred were with us, yes," the Doctor answered. "I can not say how he would act in case we were to make the trial alone."

"Do you think that Semessi can be of much help to us in our planning?" Harrie asked.

"I'm afraid not, if, as the queen says, the younger man has the greater influence. Still, it is certainly better to have him on our side than against us."

"How would you act after reaching the plain at the foot of the mountains?" inquired Leigh.

"Ah, that brings up another difficult problem," Dr. Thornton answered. "Grant that we are successful in our attempt to leave the valley, what are we to do then? We must be a hundred miles or more from the north shore, while the coast to the south is probably three times that distance away. How can Mildred ever endure the long and perilous journey to the sea? We shall have to depend on what food we can secure along the way, too, which makes the task all the greater,"

"It is a rather hopeless outlook, isn't it?"

said his son. "But I believe we are going to find some way out of our difficulty yet. It may take time, though, and plenty of hard knocks."

There the discussion ceased for the time. It was taken up again and again, however, in the days which followed. For two weeks the Americans racked their brains in search of some practical suggestion which they could offer to the young queen, but without success. Several interviews were held with her, on each of which Mildred showed wonderful courage and cheerfulness in spite of the discouraging outlook.

"I feel so much safer with you here that I can wait some time without losing patience," she said on one occasion in explanation of her cheery spirit.

Meanwhile the trio were allowed to come and go freely during the day. They felt positive that Ketabu was keeping a continual oversight of their movements, however; an opinion which Semessi also held, and which caused him to station a guard of three men at the hut every

night, though the Doctor protested against it. But while the young chief made no hostile move, and all seemed quiet, the Americans still felt that their situation was, after all, a critical one.

The bulk of the natives appeared to be most friendly, and greeted them with smiles and pleasant words whenever they passed through the narrow streets. Harrie and Leigh made good use of the opportunities this afforded for acquiring a knowledge of the language, and made reasonably rapid progress in its use.

The lads never tired of wandering about the town, watching the women at their work (for the men seldom devoted themselves to labor), and the children as they laughed and shouted in their mimic battles. Harrie said that the females looked like walking hay stacks, for they wore three or four petticoats of woven grass, of different sizes, one over the other, the undermost being the longest, while that on the outside was quite short. The garments certainly did give their wearers a bulky and ungainly appearance, but the women did not

seem in the least inconvenienced by the multitude of skirts, and after all the style had as much to commend it as some of those among more civilized nations.

The youths were especially interested in watching the manufacture of pottery. All the earthen-ware vessels used in the valley were made by the old women, who sat all day long on the ground before their huts, pounding the lumps of clay into a powder with large stones, mixing this with water into a thick paste, and molding the dishes by hand.

It seemed to be a very simple operation, and Leigh persuaded one old crone to permit him to try his hand at the work. The resulting bowl, for so Leigh labelled it, was of such an indefinite shape that it might have been almost anything else he chose to call it. Harrie laughed heartily at his companion, while the crowd of natives which had gathered around were equally delighted.

It was near the middle of the third week of the Americans' sojourn in the valley that an

incident occurred which showed conclusively the attitude of Ketabu towards them, and also brought on the crisis which they had all along been expecting.

The youths had been spending the afternoon as usual in wandering about the streets, keeping both eyes and ears open to take in all that was to be seen or heard. It was already nearing sundown. They were at the opposite end of the town from their own quarters, and Harrie had just suggested that they ought to be returning.

At that moment Leigh exclaimed:

"Look there, Hal! What do you call that?" and he indicated a small bag made of netting which was suspended from a tree nearby. His comrade looked more closely, to see that within the swinging hammock was a sleeping child of two or three years. The infant was curled up like a dog, head to feet, and seemed to be slumbering soundly in spite of its awkward position. The breeze imparted a gentle motion to this

rude cradle, thus saving the parent, who was squatted near at hand, all effort.

"Did you ever see anything like that?" Harrie ejaculated, as he and his friend went closer for a better view. "I should think the poor child's back would be broken!"

"Oh, he's used to it I presume," Leigh returned. "But it's not such treatment as an American baby would thrive under."

"Come on," the other said, turning away. "We must hurry if we are to get back to the hut before dark."

They quickened their steps as he spoke, and hastened on up the street. They had gone but a short distance, however, before a man came hurriedly out from behind a hut just as they were passing. So unexpectedly did he appear that the lads were unable to check their onward motion in time to prevent a collision, and all three tumbled in a heap on the ground.

As the youths scrambled to their feet the fellow grasped Leigh around the neck, calling out loudly in the native tongue for help. By this

time Harrie had recognized their assailant as Haniwana, and it flashed quickly upon him that the affair was all a plot to bring about the capture of himself and his comrade.

Leigh was not long in freeing himself from the dwarf's embrace, and both lads started off on a run, for the hunchback's cries had brought an immediate response, and a dozen men came hastening from behind the nearby dwellings to his aid. All this the boys took in at a glance as they hurried away.

Side by side they ran, while close behind came the pursuing natives. Such persons as were in the street at the time looked inquiringly at the runners, but made no attempt to hinder the progress of the lads, a fact which confirmed Harrie in his belief that Ketabu was responsible for the affair, and that the men who were chasing Leigh and himself were some of the young chief's personal retainers.

They had covered about one-half the distance to the hut, and the pursuers had gained nothing, when suddenly the boys heard a shout in their

rear. It was answered by an equally loud cry in front, and looking ahead they saw that three or four men were coming rapidly down upon them.

Harrie glanced quickly to either side, and then darted in between two of the dwellings on his left, calling on Leigh to follow. Among the huts the two youths ran, across the first street, and on to the second, down which they turned. There was now but one row of buildings between them and the river, and unless they could succeed in passing beyond their pursuers before the latter reached the street on which the boys were running, all means of escape would be cut off.

The lads put forth their utmost efforts, and sped along at a headlong pace. But just as they were congratulating themselves that they were about out of danger, three men emerged into the road before them.

Whirling quickly about, the youths fled back in the direction from which they had come, only to find that a number of the natives had closed

in on that side also. There was but one course open to them, therefore, and this they adopted. Turning, they dashed down a laneway leading to the waterside. As they came out at the farther end, however, they found themselves in the midst of a group which had evidently been awaiting their coming, for they quickly closed in about the lads, catching Leigh by the collar, and bringing him heavily to the ground.

Harrie was more fortunate, and slipping from the grasp of the man who had seized him, he dodged between two others who attempted to stop his passage. He was now close to the bank of the stream, and, without hesitation prepared to leap. The next instant he disappeared with a loud splash beneath the waters of the river.

CHAPTER IX.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

When Harrie took his headlong plunge into the river he had a definite purpose in mind. He had noticed, as he broke through the circle of men, that the bridge which connected the island and the main shore was only a half dozen rods above him, and that fleeting glimpse suggested a way of escape to his ready brain.

So, as he went beneath the waters, he immediately struck out against the current, and swam below the surface, until his breath gave out. Then he simply rose until the tip of his nose was above the level of the stream, and, refilling his lungs with air, sank for a second time.

When he again came up he was beneath the

bridge, where he found just space enough between the water and the flooring to allow his head to emerge from the liquid. Catching hold of one of the long beams upon which the planking was laid, he held himself motionless and listened for sounds of his pursuers.

Meanwhile the natives, totally unprepared for such a move on the lad's part, stood staring in amazement at the spot where he had disappeared. As the seconds passed and his form did not reappear, they glanced down the stream, expecting to see him there. But not a trace could they discern. They did not once think of looking up the river, and as it was already dusk, the slight ripple caused by the youth when he rose to breathe entirely escaped their attention. Therefore, after waiting for five minutes or more they became convinced that the boy had gone to the bottom, and turned their attention to the captive they had secured.

He had been bound hand and foot, and now lay upon the ground awaiting their pleasure. First making sure that his wrists were securely

tied, the men released his lower limbs and signed for him to rise. Then, placing him in the center of the squad, they hastened away down the street.

During this interval Harrie had remained perfectly quiet in his original position. Now, however, not being able to hear anything of his pursuers, he worked his way along until he was at the lower edge of the bridge and on the outer, or island, end. This gave him a chance to observe the opposite bank of the river. The light had waned so rapidly that he was able to distinguish little, but he saw enough to convince him that the enemy had gone

Still, he did not dare to leave his hiding place, and remained clinging to the stringer for nearly three-quarters of an hour longer. It was then quite dark, and the lad was chilled through from his long immersion, so he decided to run the risk of detection, which he felt sure would be small, rather than to delay any further.

Letting go of the timber, he allowed himself

to float with the current until he was well below the town. When certain that he was so far from the nearest dwellings that all danger of discovery was past, the boy swam ashore and clambered out upon the bank.

Stopping only long enough to wring the water from his dripping garments, Harrie cautiously began his advance. The gloom, while it made his chances of escape much better, also rendered his progress more difficult and uncertain. Skirting the edge of the village at a considerable distance, he again approached it when nearing the locality of their own hut.

He now advanced more boldly, and was pushing forward at a brisk pace, when he heard the sound of voices just in front. Quickly stepping behind a nearby bush, he dropped noiselessly to the ground, listening intently. The speakers came nearer, and presently went by within ten feet of the crouching boy. He could plainly distinguish their voices, but was not yet sufficiently familiar with the language to understand the subject of their remarks. He was

positive, however, that one of the men was the dwarf.

When they had passed out of hearing Harrie drew a long breath of relief, and resumed his interrupted advance. This time he met with no one, and was soon back at the hut. Here he found his father greatly alarmed over the protracted absence of Leigh and himself, an alarm which was hardly lessened by his own recital.

As he concluded the physician exclaimed:

"There can be no doubt that this is a move of Ketabu to obtain possession of you two lads. Had it succeeded he would have taken the first opportunity of getting me out of the way. But we must do something at once to bring about Leigh's release. We must find Semessi."

"I can send one of the sentinels who are outside for him," the lad said. "That will be the quickest way."

"Do so immediately," Dr. Thornton commanded.

Harrie hastened to obey. Stepping quickly to the door he called one of the guards to him

and by use of the native words at his command, supplanted by vigorous motions, he gave the man to understand that they wished to see the chief at once. The fellow nodded and started off on a run.

To the two Americans, who spent the time in walking up and down their narrow quarters, it seemed that Semessi would never come. But it was in reality not more than twenty minutes before the native hastily entered the hut.

"You want me?" he demanded. "Why?"

Harrie explained their reasons for summoning him, relating in detail the story of his afternoon adventure. Then he asked:

"Don't you believe that Ketabu is at the bottom of this scrape? I thought likely Haniwana was acting under his orders."

"Yes," the chief assented, briefly. "Ketabu want boy. Him do it." He was silent for a time as though considering Then he remarked:

"Come. We go tell Golden Lily," and he moved towards the door.

The Americans followed him, and, quickly traversing the streets, they arrived at the royal dwelling upon the island. Semessi entered without stopping to knock, and they found Mildred sitting by the table, on which a candle was burning.

She started up in alarm at their unexpected entrance, but gave a smile of welcome on seeing who her visitors were. Before she could question them as to the reason for their coming, however, the chief turned to Harrie and said abruptly:

"You tell her."

Thus directed, the lad recounted the incidents of the afternoon, including the sending for Semessi, and the latter's action upon hearing the story. The girl listened with pale cheeks and dilated eyes, and at the close stood for a moment without speaking.

Then she turned to the native and addressed him rapidly in his own tongue. He made answer at some length, whereupon the queen again faced the two Americans and said:

"Semessi agrees with you that Ketabu is responsible for this outrage, but does not think that Leigh is in any danger for the present. So we must find out if we can where he is confined, and rescue him at once."

"That was my own idea," the physician returned. "But when we have done that, will it not be necessary for us to leave the valley right away?"

"Perhaps so," Mildred answered, thoughtfully.

"It seems to me that if we are to get away at all, it will be imperative for us to go immediately," Dr. Thornton continued. "Ketabu is evidently planning to prevent any such arrangement, and since his first effort has failed he will probably make some other move. Our greatest hope of success, therefore, is to go before he is expecting any action on our part. Do you not agree with me?"

For answer the young queen again addressed the chief, and this time their conversation continued for several minutes. When it was over

she turned back to the gentleman and responded to his question:

"You are right, and this must be a part of our plan. We will find out where Leigh is and try to rescue him. If you succeed, you are to return here, where I will be in readiness to start. If all goes well we can be beyond the falls before morning, and then there will be little danger of Ketabu's overtaking us."

"Very good," assented the Doctor. "But the most important part of the matter rests right here—how are we to find out the location of Leigh's prison?"

"That *is* the most difficult question," admitted Mildred, "perhaps Semessi can give us some suggestions, however," and she appealed to the old man.

He shook his head doubtfully.

"Me not know," he rejoined. "P'rhaps he put him one place, p'rhaps 'nother. Me not tell."

"I don't see that there's very much we can do, then," Harrie remarked, speaking for the

first time. "Of course father and I have no idea where to look."

"Does Ketabu live in the town?" inquired the gentleman.

"Yes," the girl answered, "but he would hardly carry your friend to his home."

They sat for several moments in silence after that, all busily thinking over the problem before them. Their reverie was broken in upon by a low call outside the door, and the queen stepped along to the opening. After a moment she raised the curtain and a bent old woman entered, blinking at the sudden light.

"Come here, Koloka," Mildred said encouragingly, as she crossed to her seat by the table. "What is it that you wish to tell me?"

The poor old creature glanced uneasily at the three men, but when the maid nodded reassuringly she ventured to speak in a low tone. Her story proved to be of some length, and before she had finished it was evident from the excited manner of the queen that it was an important one as well. When Koloka ceased Mil-

dred turned to the waiting Americans, saying eagerly:

"It is all right now. Koloka has told me where your friend is. It is a plot of Ketabu to prevent your hindering him in his wish to marry me. She overheard him explaining it to the dwarf, early in the afternoon, but could not come here to tell me about it then. He intended to take both of the boys captive, and then send word to you that they wished for you to come to them. Thus he would capture all three of you. Then he was to send you down the mountain and leave you at the edge of the plain to go wherever you wished."

"But where is Leigh?" Harrie interrupted.

"I was coming to that," the girl went on. "After they caught him, they took him out to an old hut there is about a mile to the southwest of the town. Semessi knows where it is. There they left him with a guard of two men. Koloka overheard Haniwana give his report to Ketabu after he returned. So all you have to do now is to go and release him."

"Are you sure the old woman is to be trusted?" queried Dr. Thornton somewhat doubtfully.

"Yes, indeed," was the rejoinder. "You see she used to help Maggie care for me when I was small, and she has always thought a great deal of me. She was at work in her garden plot outside the town, and Ketabu was talking with the dwarf on the edge of the woods only a few rods off. They could not see her on account of the intervening plants. Then she watched for Haniwana, and when he came back she crept up outside the hut until she was near enough to hear all that was said. I'm sure it is all just as Koloka reports."

"Then the sooner we start the better," the gentleman exclaimed. "It is now ten o'clock. If Semessi will go with us, I think we can easily release Leigh and return here by midnight. That will give us time to reach the falls before dawn. How soon can you go?" and he turned to the chief.

"Me ready now," was the terse response.

Dr. Thornton and his son rose to their feet, but before they could cross the room Mildred cried:

"Wait a moment, please," and she disappeared through a door in the rear of the apartment. When she returned she held in either hand a native war club. The handles were of wood, and into one end of each was fitted a round blade of dark, polished stone, keen-edged and deadly.

"Semessi made them for Maggie and me," she explained. "I did not know but what you would need them before you got back."

The Doctor thanked her, and, taking the weapons, handed one to Harrie. Semessi talked with the queen for a moment, and then the trio left the building.

The old man naturally took the lead, and the others followed him across the river, through the town, and down a narrow pathway between the garden plots of the villagers. For nearly a half hour the advance continued, and then the chief stopped his companions by a word.

"Wait," he said, and vanished in the darkness. He was gone ten minutes, returning as abruptly as he went, to announce:

"Men there. One sleep; other 'wake. Come."

Cautiously the party moved on. Presently the dim outline of the hut showed against the sky. Inch by inch the trio advanced, keeping in the shadow of the trees, until the open doorway became visible, in which a man was standing, spear in hand. A short distance to one side another form lay outstretched on the ground.

At a signal from Semessi, they rushed forward, and threw themselves upon the unsuspecting sentinel. He struggled for an instant, but a vigorous blow on the side of his head brought him to the ground. His associate, aroused by the noise of the attack, was quickly overpowered and both were securely bound.

This done the physician and Harrie entered the hut, while the chief stood guard over the prisoners.

"Leigh must be asleep," the lad said as they stepped within the entrance. "He would have been out to see what the row was about, if he were not. Leigh!" he called, raising his voice. "Leigh!"

There was no response, and Dr. Thornton struck a match, of which he still had a few. As it flared up they saw to their consternation that the hut was empty.

CHAPTER X.

KETABU MAKES ANOTHER MOVE.

As THE tiny flame revealed the fact that Leigh was not in the hut, both Harrie and his father gave vent to their chagrin in a low-toned exclamation. Then, as the match burned out, they turned and groped their way outside, where the native was standing in silent watchfulness over the two captives. He faced about at the sound of their steps, and the lad said in an excited half-whisper:

"He isn't there, Semęssi! The hut is empty. Where do you suppose they have taken him?"

"You stay here," was the reply, as the chief disappeared inside the building. Some minutes elapsed and then the Americans heard his voice calling for them to come. Entering, they found

him on his knees at the rear of the structure, and as they bent beside him, he pointed out the dim outlines of a rough opening in the leafy thatch which formed the wall.

"Boy make hole. Crawl out. Then run away," was the brief explanation.

"True enough," Dr. Thornton returned with a sigh of relief. "Then Leigh is safe after all. That lifts a great load of anxiety from my mind. We must return at once to our quarters, and apprise him of our intended flight. What shall we do with our prisoners?"

"Leave here," Semessi made answer. "They safe here."

"Very well then," said the physician. "Only be sure they are securely tied. We don't want them to get away and inform Ketabu of our plans."

A brief inspection of the two sentinels and their bonds proved satisfactory, and the Doctor remarked briskly:

"Now if you will kindly guide us back to our

own hut, I think we will find Leigh awaiting us there."

"Yes," the old man responded as he led the way down the path. Only a short distance had been traversed, however, before Semessi stopped, whispering:

"Man coming. Hear!"

Sure enough, the tread of feet was distinctly audible, evidently approaching from the direction of the town.

"New guard coming," the native remarked in a low voice. "We must catch."

His companions assented, and all three stepped back into the shadow of the trees. Already the newcomers were close at hand, and in another moment they were abreast the hidden trio. Then, at a word from Semessi, they fell upon the unsuspecting couple—for there were but two. So unprepared were the victims for any such assault that they made but a feeble resistance, and were soon overpowered.

While the Americans held the prisoners, the chief stuffed gags of leaves into their mouths,

and secured hands and feet with pieces of vine. Then they were laid well to one side of the path, and the victors continued their interrupted walk. No further word was spoken until they were on the outskirts of the village. There the native halted and said:

"You go hut, get boy, come Golden Lily. Me go there now."

"All right," Harrie rejoined. "We'll be along shortly."

Thereupon their guide left them, and the two Americans went on alone. Ten minutes more brought them to the hut which had served as their lodgings since their arrival in the valley. There, to their great relief and satisfaction, they found Leigh awaiting them.

"So you escaped from the clutches of the dwarf without our aid?" was the physician's greeting.

"Yes. Did you go to release me?" Leigh queried in return. "How did you know where to look for me?"

"Through Mildred," Harrie explained, and

he gave an account of the events which had taken place since his friend's capture.

"You were more fortunate than I was," the other said. "Those fellows there tripped me up as nice as you please, and before I had any chance to get on my feet again three or four of them were on top of me. My! but didn't they knock the breath out of me, though! I tried my best to throw them off, but it was no use, they were too many for me, and tied my hands and feet.

"Then they turned their attention to looking for you, but as you didn't come to the top of the water so far as they could see, they concluded that you must have drowned, so they unfastened my feet, and made me go with them. They took me by a round about road, so that I had completely lost all sense of direction before we came to a halt. Then I found we were in a small clearing in front of a tumble-down hut. Into this they hustled me, and all went away except the dwarf, who staid for fifteen minutes or more, taunting me in all sorts

of ways. He made me pretty angry, but I wouldn't let him have the satisfaction of seeing it, so at last he went out, and two men came to the door, where they stood on guard.

"I worked at my bonds as well as I could in the dark, until I got them loose enough to slip my hands out, for they were tied very loosely. Then I got my knife and cut away the thatch between two of the uprights. Of course I made a little noise, but fortunately the two sentinels were thick-headed chaps, and so long as I kept away from the doorway they paid no attention to me at all.

"After a couple of hours of hard work I made an opening large enough for me to crawl through, and was free. Once outside, I skulked along at the edge of the clearing until I reached the pathway.

"I didn't know where it would lead, but I followed it down to the river, and from there I easily found my way here. I was a trifle surprised not to find you, fearing that Ketabu had you both. But I soon concluded that you were

out looking for me, and that if I remained right here it would straighten matters out before long. I had not been waiting more than half an hour when you came."

"We are fortunate indeed to have come out of the adventure so well," Dr. Thornton commented gravely. "But we cannot remain here. It must be midnight, and Mildred will be waiting for us. We are to leave the valley to-night," he explained, turning to Leigh. "We feel that it is unsafe for us to delay our flight longer, for fear Ketabu will make it impossible for us to go. His move to-night shows that he has become actively engaged against us, and every moment increases our danger. Semessi is to go with us as far as the village at the lower end of the pass."

As he spoke the trio passed outside, and set off towards the river. Not one of them saw the dark form which crouched at one side of the door, and which now sped away through the gloom like some misshapen spirit of the night.

Utterly unconscious of the fact that Hani-

wana had overheard their conversation, the Americans hastened on to the island-dwelling where they found Mildred alone.

"Semessi has already set out with his band of soldiers to hold the pass at the falls," she explained. "He said we could follow as soon as you came. And Koloka is in the other room packing what few articles I wish to carry with me."

"Do you know," she went on after a moment, "I really dread to go, now that the actual leaving is at hand. This is all the home I can remember, except indistinctly, and it is dearer to me than one would think. Thanks to Maggie I have been comfortable—she would not live like a savage, but had this furniture made, rude to be sure, but civilized, and she also taught me how to make the candles. They have been of untold comfort to me since she died. Then, too, she made many little conveniences for my sleeping room. Poor Maggie, I loved you in spite of the wrong which you did me," and tears glistened in the young girl's eyes.

"But I *must* go!" she continued. "I can not stay longer. I do not know what awaits me in the jungles at the foot of these mountains, or how I shall fare after reaching the coast, but even though death itself shall come, I go gladly, for my position here will soon be unbearable."

As she ceased, the old native woman emerged from the inner room, bearing a large bundle, rolled in heavy matting. She spoke to Mildred, who answered briefly, and disappeared within the adjoining apartment. She was gone some time, and when she returned her face bore traces of weeping.

"I am ready now," she said quietly and without a tremor in her voice. Leigh raised the package to his shoulder, and the little party was soon in motion.

As they filed out across the bridge into the town not a sound broke the stillness save their own soft footfalls upon the planking. The whole valley seemed wrapped in slumber. The mist, which earlier in the evening had hung about the crest of the mountains, now enveloped

all the plain in its folds. The high-peaked gables of the huts loomed huge and indistinct through their grey shroud, and every tree and stone took on weird shapes because of the fog.

"Don't you ever have any clear weather here?" Harrie asked in a low tone as they left the village behind them, and stumbled on down the narrow pathway. "It seems to me that it has been misty most of the time since we came."

"It is so much of the time," Mildred admitted. "For some reason which I cannot explain there is a fog upon the peaks the greater part of the year, and it frequently comes down into the valley. But we do have clear weather sometimes, and then the views are beautiful and wonderful."

There was a pause, during which all pressed on in silence. At length Leigh said:

"Will Koloka go with you, or will she turn back at the end of the pass?"

"She declares that she will go wherever I do," the girl answered. "I tried to persuade her that it was not possible, but she will not be

convinced. I told her it would only make the trip harder for us all, but she insists on going. I am sorry, for I know that I alone will be a heavy burden for you."

"No, no," Dr. Thornton returned quickly. "Don't feel that way, please. We are all glad to be able to aid you. And let the old woman go. One more can make no great difference, one way or the other. She will be company for you as well."

"Hush," said Mildred softly. "We are nearing the first hamlet; we do not want to arouse the natives, you know."

Like silent spectres the little column passed through the clustered dwellings, without the snapping of a twig. Even the dogs seemed to be lost in slumber, and with a sigh of relief they went on into the forest once more.

"I wish Semessi had not gone on ahead," Harrie remarked after a short interval. "Somehow I can't help feeling that we have made a mistake to divide our forces. It may be

only nervousness, but I should feel safer if the chief and his warriors were along too."

"I don't see myself why he should wish to do as he did," the queen responded. "He said we would be less likely to arouse suspicion if he went first with the men. Perhaps, too, he was afraid that Ketabu would have a guard at the falls, and did not wish me to see the fighting. I agree with you, however, that I should feel safer were he here."

Again the silence fell upon the group as they pushed on. The several hamlets along the route were safely passed in succession, and the feeling of impending disaster, which was strong upon them, in a measure grew lighter. The mist was thinning slowly, while the ragged peaks of the eastern range stood out indistinctly against the increasing glow which showed that day was at hand.

Already the dull roar of the falls came to their ears across the intervening distance with a regular throb and rhythm as of some giant heart beat. A half mile more and they would

have joined Semessi, and danger would be over. They were nearing the end of the grove, which ceased abruptly at the lower edge of the long upward slope that led to the pass behind the falling waters.

Then without warning and without a sound there rose from the shelter of rock and tree a band of dusky forms. In an instant they had closed around the party, and flight was impossible.

CHAPTER XI.

A SERIOUS SITUATION.

But the Americans were not made prisoners without a struggle. So complete was the surprise that the little group were entirely surrounded before they realized their danger. By the time the natives reached them, however, the trio had rallied and were ready to defend themselves.

All three were armed—for Harrie and his father still carried the stone hatchets given them the previous evening by the queen, and Leigh bore a light spear which had been left for him by Semessi. Therefore they were prepared to give a good account of themselves.

The growing light revealed this fact to the natives, and they acted accordingly. None of

them cared to run the risk of a close encounter with the determined strangers, and so, while a number made a mock attack in front, of sufficient vigor to engage the full attention of the Americans without endangering their own skins, the remainder of the forces stole upon the victims from behind, and by a skillfully executed rush succeeded in overpowering the trio before the latter could turn their weapons against these new antagonists.

Having secured their prisoners with stout lashings of cord, the soldiers turned to Mildred, who stood quietly by, watching the struggle with pale face. For a moment they hesitated, and then gently bound the girl's hands, in spite of her low-toned reproaches.

When this was done the squad formed in line, with the captives in their midst, and started on their return to the town. For a time the physician and his young companions walked in moody silence; then Mildred said in a whisper:

"Where do you suppose Koloka is? I have

not seen her since we were first attacked. Do you suppose she got away?"

"Sure enough," Dr. Thornton returned. "She has disappeared, hasn't she? I am inclined to think that she must have slipped away unobserved during the confusion. She may have gone on to warn Semessi. In that case he may come to our rescue."

"I hope so," was the answer. "And yet after all he may think it wiser to wait. We can be sure that he will do all in his power to aid us."

The natives now increased their speed, and conversation became difficult. This quicker pace was kept up until more than half the distance had been covered. Then they came upon Ketabu and Haniwana advancing to meet them. The chief's face lighted up with pleasure at sight of the prisoners, while the dwarf's countenance took on a grin of fiendish glee. Both, however, fell in at the head of the column, and the march was continued without interruption.

The town was just awaking as they entered

its streets, and many curious glances followed the four captives as they were hurried on across the bridge to the island, and back to the room which they had left scarcely four hours before. Then Ketabu dismissed his soldiers, and sent even the ever-present Haniwana outside, while he turned to Mildred with an air of calm assurance, and addressed her in the native tongue.

Anxiously the trio watched and listened, for they readily surmised that the fate of the queen and also of themselves was at stake.

For some moments the chief spoke, while a deep flush slowly mounted the maiden's cheek, and the slumbering passion in her eyes kindled into a blaze. Suddenly she raised her hand imperiously, and the native stopped short in the middle of a sentence. Then she answered him in a few words so sharp and cutting that the fellow hung his head abashed.

It was only an instant, however, before he recovered his self-confidence, and resumed his remarks, this time in a more commanding tone. How long he would have talked the Americans

could not tell, for in the midst of his speech the curtain door was flung back and Semessi entered, his whole form quivering with rage.

Across the room he strode to the side of Ketabu, who had turned to see who the daring intruder was, and, before that astonished dignitary had time to realize the situation, the old chief seized him by the shoulders and pushed him with no gentle hands through the doorway into the outer air.

Having done this Semessi approached Mildred and poured out a torrent of excited words, to which she returned a few brief comments. Somewhat relieved by this unusual outburst of temper, the native recovered his equipoise and resumed his customary impassive manner.

Meanwhile Ketabu had picked himself up from his ignominious resting place outside, and attempted to re-enter the apartment. Leigh and Harrie, however, stood on guard, each armed with a stool, so that the young noble thought better of it, and hastened away.

Mildred now turned and explained to the trio

the meaning of the scene they had just witnessed.

"Ketabu came offering to release you, and send you back to the coast under escort, if I would marry him," she said. "When I refused, he threatened to kill us all. What more he would have said I do not know, for it was at that point Semessi came in.

"As you surmised, Koloka slipped away in the turmoil of the attack, and carried word to him of our capture. He started immediately on his return, hoping to come up with us, but he was not able to do so. On arriving at the bridge he found it guarded by a band of Ketabu's followers, who refused to allow him and his men to cross.

"Semessi forced his way over, however, and it was this attempt to keep him away from me, coupled with Ketabu's presence here, which so enraged him. He says he will go at once and collect a force from among his own party sufficient to overawe the young chief, and enable

us to leave the valley in spite of him. Meanwhile we are to remain quietly here."

"That is very good," Dr. Thornton assented, "and we will guarantee to protect you if he will furnish us with weapons. We have lost the ones you gave us last night."

"There are some in the other room," the girl replied, and she speedily brought them forth—three stone tomahawks and an equal number of light spears.

"That is right," Harrie cried. "Now we can hold out here, should there be any need, while Semessi goes for his friends. But the sooner we can get away from here the better, I say."

The old native nodded, as if in assent to the boy's remarks, and left the room. There was silence for some time after he went, and then Koloka entered by the doorway which led out to the pavilion. She bore in her arms the package which Leigh had been carrying and which he had dropped on the ground at the time of their capture.

Her entrance reminded the trio of the fact that it would be well to guard the door through which she had come, as well as that at the side of the room, and Leigh was accordingly stationed there.

The morning passed slowly by. No one came to annoy them, and Semessi did not return. Mildred and Koloka prepared a simple meal in which all shared, and then the monotonous waiting was resumed. About one o'clock the old chief came in, with slow step, and gloomy face. He went directly to the queen and made his report to her in his usual laconic manner.

"He has failed," the girl explained to her companions as he finished. "He finds that Ketabu has won over the greater part of those who were his retainers, and those who remain true will not take up arms in my behalf. They say let me marry the chief, and that will end the whole difficulty. But that is something I will *never* do. There is a strong guard of the young chief's men at the bridge, and it would be impossible for us to escape from the island, even

if we could make our way down the mountain unmolested."

"You are sure there is no other way out of the valley except the path behind the falls?" the Doctor questioned.

"Yes. There is no place where it is possible to climb the cliffs, and no other opening through them is known," was the response.

"Then I do not see that there is anything that we can do," said Harrie, "except to wait for further developments. We can defend ourselves here for some time, should Ketabu try to force his plans upon us, though he could starve us into submission eventually."

"He shall never force me to submit," cried Mildred, with flashing eyes. "I'll never marry him, never! I will die first!"

Just at this moment the young chief presented himself at the door, demanding admission. At a word from the queen, Leigh, who was on guard, granted his request, and he entered. Then the lad, motioning for Harrie to

take his place, slipped outside to look about him.

The area within the stockade was empty, save for the guard of a dozen men at the gateway, and the boy made a circuit of the building which served as the royal residence. As already stated, this stood directly opposite the entrance to the enclosure, and near the northern wall. First there was the rude porch, or pavilion, which served as throne room for the tribal gatherings. Back of this was a low, squat building of logs, some forty feet square. A door near the western end of the front connected Mildred's private quarters with the porch. A second at the center of the west side also opened into the same room, and was the one by which the Americans were accustomed to enter.

Immediately in the rear of the larger and more substantial structure stood a native hut of good size, which the lad instinctively knew to be Semessi's dwelling. Passing around this, which was silent and deserted, Leigh saw in the

northeastern corner of the main building another door. From what he knew of the rooms occupied by the queen, the lad felt sure this led into some apartment with which he was unacquainted. Continuing his circuit he found still another opening in the eastern wall. An idle curiosity moved him to peer within, but all was silence and gloom, so he did not enter.

As he reached the front of the building he saw the dwarf crouching upon the porch close by the portiere which covered the door communicating with the room in which the prisoners were holding their conference with Ketabu.

Impelled by a desire to punish the dwarf for his continual eaves-dropping, and also by a boyish wish to have some fun at the other's expense, but with no intention of hurting the fellow, Leigh raised the spear, which he still held in his hand, and advanced noiselessly upon the native, whose back was towards him. When within a few feet of the squatting figure the lad reached out and touched one of the broad shoulders with the sharp point of his weapon.

With a howl of fear the dwarf leaped to his feet, and, seeing who his tormentor was, fled panic-stricken around the corner of the house, with Leigh close at his heels. Down the west side of the structure they raced, the boy taking care to keep just far enough behind to spur his victim on to greater exertions. Around Semessi's hut they chased, and then Haniwana, now nearly winded, darted in at the open door which had attracted the boy's curiosity a few moments earlier.

Once within its shelter he seemed to feel himself to be safe, for he halted and turned a mocking face to his pursuer. Seeing that Leigh still advanced towards him, however, the hunchback called out shrilly: "Tabu, tabu!"

For an instant the youth hesitated, mindful of the experience that had befallen Harrie and himself when trespassing upon forbidden places at the coast village, but the mocking face before him aroused his ire to such a pitch that he threw caution to the winds, and rushed at the grinning native.

The dwarf was so surprised by this sacrilegious act that he did not move until Leigh was almost up with him. Then, in his haste to escape, he stumbled and fell sprawling upon the floor. Before he could rise his pursuer was on top of him, and, grasping him by the shoulders, administered a shaking which made his teeth rattle.

"So you will spy on us all the time, will you?" cried the boy between shakes. "You miserable, sneaking tell-tale! I'd like to thrash you soundly; but I won't because you're a cripple." Then his eye fell upon a tall, conical, wide-mouthed basket which stood near at hand. At sight of it he went on:

"I'll give you a lesson you won't be apt to forget right away, though! We'll see how *you* like being tied up!" and he dragged the hunchback across the room until he could reach the big hamper. Seizing it in his right hand he held the struggling native with his left, while he clapped the basket down over the captive's head and shoulders, pinning his arms to his

sides. Then he drew from his pocket the cord which had been used to secure his own feet the previous evening, and proceeded to bind the dwarf's ankles firmly together.

"There," he chuckled as he finished, "how do you like being tied with your own rope, eh? It will give you a chance to meditate on the sin of meddling in other people's business."

He now glanced about him curiously. His eyes had become accustomed to the gloom,—for there was no light save that which gained entrance through the doors—and saw that the room was almost bare of furniture. Three or four of the large baskets, a huge native drum, and a row of skulls along the western wall were all the apartment contained. As he looked he gave a low whistle, and said under his breath:

"I guess I've done it now. This must be a sort of temple, or sacred house of some kind. That accounts for Haniwana's crying 'tabu'. I'll leave now before anyone comes," and he passed quickly outside, leaving the captive lying upon the floor.

"I don't know but I've done wrong," he muttered as he hastened back to join his companions. "He is a cripple and I ought not to have been so rough with him. But it's no more than he deserved, and there's some satisfaction in thinking that he won't do any more spying for a number of hours at least."

Here he turned the corner in time to see Ketabu come flying through the door of Mildred's room, propelled by a vigorous kick from Dr. Thornton's boot. The young chief fell in a heap upon the earth but quickly picked himself up, and with many exclamations of rage, hurried off towards the gateway.

Greatly excited by this lively scene, Leigh hastened inside, and demanded an explanation from his friend.

"You see," Harrie answered. "He came to threaten Mildred again. He made himself so obnoxious that she couldn't stand it any longer, and asked father to put him out, which he immediately proceeded to do."

"I should say so," his comrade returned with

a laugh. "Both he and Haniwana are having rather rough usage this afternoon," and he related his own adventure with the dwarf, much to Harrie's amusement. But Mildred looked grave.

"I'm afraid our discourteous treatment of Ketabu, together with your act, will render our enemies more bitter than ever," she said. "Not that your frightening Haniwana will do any harm, but your entrance into the 'forbidden room' of the tribe is a more serious offence. Our situation was so near hopeless, however, that it will make little difference in the end."

For a time there was silence. Then Semessi rose and quietly left the room. Why he went no one knew. An hour passed, and he did not return. The afternoon was already advanced when the curtain before the door was once more raised and the old chief stepped inside, uttering the one word:

"Come."

CHAPTER XII.

KETABU'S TRIUMPH.

WONDERING somewhat at the unexpected summons, Mildred and the three Americans rose and followed Semessi from the room. He led them around to the front of the building, to the open space before the pavilion, where the castaways had stood on the day of their first hearing before the queen.

Now, as then, the wide area within the stockade was filled with natives, and in all the sea of faces turned towards him, the physician was unable to detect a single friendly glance. Evidently Ketabu had done his work well. He was sitting upon the platform in the rude chair which in all former tribal gatherings had been allotted to the Golden Lily, and his face glowed with triumph.

Leaving the prisoners standing before the expectant throng, Semessi took his place behind the younger chief. There was a brief interval of hushed expectancy, and then Ketabu arose.

With a scornful glance at the little group before him, he began to speak. While the castaways were unable to understand all that he said, yet they caught enough to give them some idea of his argument, and this knowledge was later increased by a fuller explanation on the part of Mildred. Beginning with the coming of Maggie and the child, and the selection of the latter as queen, he went on to tell of his own desire to marry the young girl, claiming that she had smiled upon his suit until the arrival of the white faced strangers.

Since then, bewitched by the foreign devils, she had refused all his offers, and had given all her favors to the newcomers. Urged by a sense of duty he had endeavored to force the visitors to leave, but to his surprise the Golden Lily had attempted to steal away with them under cover of the night. Therefore he had been

forced to seize them all to prevent such a catastrophe.

He had been to her a number of times during the day, he stated, striving to win her from the cursed influence of the pale faced ones, only to receive insult after insult, both from her and from the intruders, as his reward.

There remained but one remedy—the death of the strangers. He had not been willing to take this upon himself, though he knew that it would free the queen from their witcheries, and he would have been justified in such a course. He preferred to bring the matter before the tribe as a whole, that they might decide whether the Golden Lily, who had been sent to rule over them, should be allowed to depart; or whether the ones who had cast a spell over her should be punished. Were they to give up their heaven sent ruler to these men who had come among them as prisoners of war? Was it not much better to reward them according to their deserts?

So he pleaded, throwing all the fervor of the

native spirit into his words, and swaying his audience by his passionate outbursts. Only too plainly was it evident to the prisoners that Ketabu's will would rule the day.

As he ceased, and stood awaiting the approval of his hearers, Mildred, who had listened to his skillfully woven indictment with flushed cheeks and flashing eyes, turned towards the assembled throng and, holding out her hands appealingly, cried:

"Is it justice, oh, my people, is it justice to hear but one side of the question, and to judge by that alone? Will you condemn me, the Golden Lily, your queen, without allowing me to speak for myself?

"I did not come among you willingly. I had a home among my own people, and a loving father. But my nurse and Semessi stole me away from it all, and brought me hither as you know. And though you have always been kind to me, and though I have come to love Semessi in place of the father whom I have lost, yet I

have longed much for my own land and my own people.

"Ketabu did not tell you the truth. I did not favor his attentions, even in the beginning. I do not wish to marry. And if I did, should not I, the Golden Lily, have the right to choose my husband? There are other young men among you whom I would select in preference to the chief, for they are more noble.

"Nor have the white strangers bewitched me. Can I not rejoice to again see those who are of the same blood as myself? Is it not natural that I should wish to return with them to my father? Did not Semessi, though carried far away, return again to his own land? If one of your little ones were stolen away from your arms by another tribe, my sisters, would you not long for her to return? Are you unwilling that I, who have been so long a stranger in a strange land, should return to my father's house?

"Are you so changed, is your old love for me all gone? You, whom I have loved, and to whom my coming has brought prosperity, do

you now turn away from me to listen to the words of this man, who is my enemy? Oh, my people, that I should live to meet such ingratitude!'' and she burst into a passion of weeping.

A hush had fallen over the company as Mildred poured forth her plea, her head thrown proudly back, her hair radiant in the glow of the setting sun, her face flushed with excitement. For a moment it seemed that she had won the gathered natives to her cause, and that Ketabu had lost. But just when deliverance seemed assured, an unexpected happening turned back the rising tide of favor, until it swept in a mad current to the opposite extreme.

Around the eastern corner of the royal dwelling came a strange and ludicrous sight. It was Haniwana, still bearing upon his head the tall, conical basket with which Leigh had crowned him. How he had succeeded in untying his feet they never knew. But free he was, and now came staggering blindly along, groping as a blind man would, stumbling over the slightest obstacles, while his strange headgear kept up a

continual bobbing, nodding, and swaying, as though in mockery at its victim. As he advanced the dwarf gave utterance to the most unearthly yells, which, muffled by the wicker-work cage, sounded like the voice of some demon let loose from the under world.

At first no one except the prisoners recognized the hunchback, and the natives sat transfixed with terror. As Haniwana drew near the platform, however, calling out "Ketabu! Master! Release me, release me!" the young chief sprang to the ground and ran to assist his servitor

When the basket had at length been removed by a considerable expenditure of muscle, the dwarf rushed madly at Leigh, flourishing his arms, and pouring out a stream of abuse. A word from Ketabu called him back, and after a whispered conversation betwen the two, Haniwana mounted to the flooring and related his story. When he told of the lad's entrance into the 'forbidden room' in spite of the warning cry of 'tabu' his hearers burst into a tumult of

savage rage, which brought a satisfied smile to the young chief's face.

With a despairing gesture Mildred turned to her companions and whispered:

"It is all over now! Nothing that I can say will avail us after this. We are lost."

It was evident to them that her words were true. Fierce shouts arose from the throng as Ketabu once more stepped forward to address them. His words were few. He simply called attention to the additional proof just given of the evil character of the strangers, and of the stronger reasons for punishing them, asking if it were the will of the tribe that they be put to death.

A howl of assent went up from every native throat, which fairly rent the heavens with its ferocious zeal. When it had died away, the chief put a second question.

"Is it your wish that the Golden Lily marry me, under penalty of sharing the fate of the foreigners if she refuses?" he inquired. And again the consent was unanimous.

Turning to Mildred the young man said:

"What have you to say to this?"

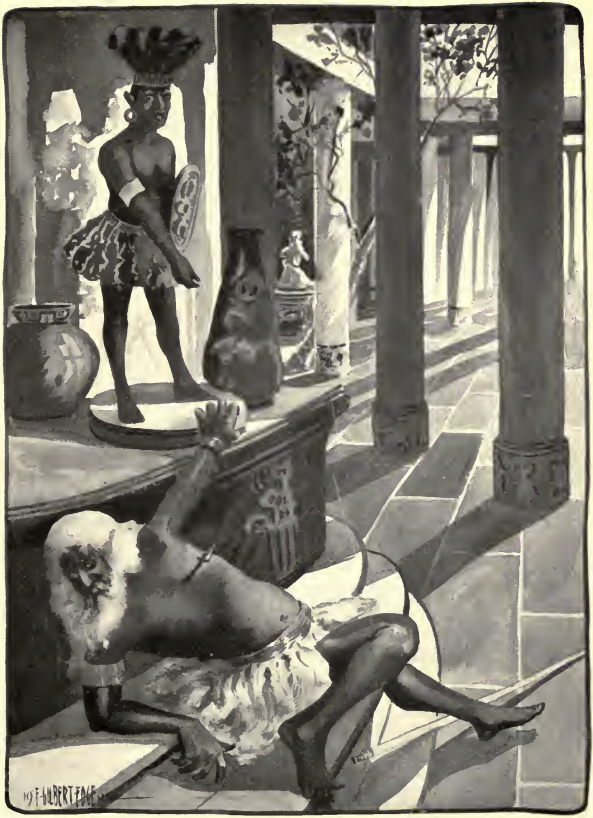
Drawing herself up proudly the queen made answer:

"I accept the unjust decree of an ungrateful people, and I choose the second alternative. Let me die with the white faced strangers."

Then turning to Semessi, she went on:

"Oh, Semessi! Semessi! You have been a father to me! You have loved me, I know, and you have long been my protector! On you have I bestowed that love which would have been given to my own parents had I known them. And can you stand there, cold and impassive, while I am condemned to death? Will you make no effort to save your child? Is your love dead? Oh that I had died with Maggie! For her love was true, even though once it wronged me!"

Throughout the entire proceedings the old man had remained like a statue of bronze behind the chair. Not a muscle moved, not an



He saw the body of the aged priest lying prone upon the floor
(Page 314)

eyelid stirred. Now, however, he stepped to the front and said:

"Semessi does not forget his love. Nor does he question the voice of the tribe when it has spoken. Yet one suggestion he would make, and it is this: Let the prisoners be bound and placed in a canoe. Then let the canoe float down the river and over the falls at the foot of the valley. Let this be the manner of their death. Is it your will?"

"It is! It is!" cried the delighted throng, the novelty of the scheme appealing forcibly to them.

Mildred listened to the old chief's words in a maze of doubt and fear. Had he gone over entirely to the side of the enemy, to suggest so cruel a method of executing the death sentence? It seemed so, and yet there was the expression: "Semessi does not forget his love." Was there some hidden meaning in his words? She could not tell, nor did the native's attitude aid her. Having received the consent of the crowd to his

proposal he turned to his young colleague and asked:

"Shall the sentence be executed to-morrow morning within an hour after sunrise?"

Ketabu bowed his assent, and then dismissed the prisoners. As they were about to leave Harrie caught the queen by the arm.

"Look!" he cried, pointing up the valley towards the fall, where the rays of the setting sun shining upon the cloud of mist and spray which hung over the rushing flood, had formed a glorious rainbow. "See, the bow of promise! An omen of good fortune for us!"

Long the little group gazed, until the bright arch dimmed and faded. Then Dr. Thornton said gravely:

"Let us trust that it is in truth the harbinger of deliverance!" and he led the way back to their room.

When they were again alone, Mildred explained to her companions those parts of the trial which they had failed to comprehend, and

they then discussed at some length their situation.

"I did not think Semessi would desert us as he did," Leigh exclaimed. "I thought he would at least move for a delay, but instead he has hastened matters as much as possible."

"I cannot believe that he is untrue," the girl said hastily. "It cannot be. He has always been my friend, and I believe even now that he is faithful, and that behind his suggestion there is some plan for our deliverance."

"I agree with you," Harrie assented warmly. "He may have done as he did to allay suspicion, intending between now and morning to make some move to free us."

"I sincerely hope that you are right," the physician rejoined. "But I cannot help doubting. However, there is nothing that we can do ourselves."

Darkness came on rapidly, and by the time the conversation came to an end night was at hand. Meanwhile a squad of six armed men had been posted at each entrance to the room,

showing plainly that Ketabu did not intend that there should be opportunity for treachery on Semessi's part.

No one visited the prisoners, save to bring them their evening meal of which they partook sparingly and in silence. The old chieftain did not put in an appearance, nor did Koloka return to be with Mildred. Not a friend seemed left to the forlorn quartette. There was very little conversation for none of the party were in a mood for talking. The consciousness that death in a cruel form was drawing nearer and nearer with each passing moment sealed their lips. Each one sat motionless, busy with his own thoughts. In the minds of the queen and Harrie there still lingered a faint hope that Semessi would yet appear for their deliverance, but as midnight came and passed without his doing so, even they were forced to believe him faithless.

Towards morning the young girl slept a little, in fitful snatches. The three Americans watched the beautiful face anxiously, fearing

the effect of the prolonged strain. But the dark circles about her eyes were the only traces left by the deep waters through which her soul was passing.

As the grey dawn came creeping over the valley, Mildred awoke. Her lips quivered a trifle as she glanced from one to another, but not a tear came to her eyes. She rose and held out her hands. Silently the trio grasped them, one by one, for a last friendly greeting. Long they stood there, each in silent sympathy for the others, until a stir at the door announced that the supreme hour was at hand.

With calm faces the prisoners met the squad of men who entered and proceeded to tie their hands. Then they were led out across the enclosure, through the great gateway, over the bridge, along the deserted village streets, and on down the river's bank. The hush of early morning was in the air. The first rays of the sun were tinging the mountain peaks with glory, the birds were awaking in the thickets as they passed, and all nature seemed glad,

while only over those four hearts hung the shadow of death.

A couple of miles were traversed and the party neared the western extremity of the valley. Here the precipitous wall of dark grey stone rose in forbidding grandeur for five hundred feet, unbroken save for the yawning crevice through which the waters of the stream plunged in their exit.

The riverside was lined with a throng of waiting natives, while close at hand was moored the canoe in which the quartette were to take that fatal leap. It was a small affair, hollowed from a single log, and differing but little from those along the coast. A few were owned and used by the inhabitants of the valley, a remnant of their old time seaboard customs.

Beside the waiting craft stood Ketabu, in all his native finery, and still that smiling look of triumph illumined his face. In vain Mildred searched the crowd for Semessi. Nowhere was he to be seen.

Evidently he did not care to witness the death of his former favorite.

As the captives halted, Ketabu motioned for two of the guard to hold the canoe close to the bank, while one by one the little party took their places within it. Then the chief gave the word to cast off the moorings.

At the command there was a stir among the crowd, and old Koloka darted out from their ranks, screaming loudly. Startled by the interruption, the man at the bow still retained his hold, allowing the boat to swing around stern foremost, while the old creature threw herself over its side, almost upsetting it with the shock. The fellow turned inquiringly to his master, who shouted impatiently:

"Let the old fool go if she wants to!"

The man released his grasp, and the frail craft was swept away by the current, to hang for an instant on the brink of the chasm. Then it vanished forever from the sight of the watching throng.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEMESSI'S VINDICATION.

Old Koloka's act, while seemingly one of unthinking frenzy, was in reality a part of a prearranged plan. In one hand she carried a native knife of bamboo, its edge as keen as that of a razor, and during the brief interval which elapsed before the canoe went over the falls she severed the bonds of the prisoners.

Thus it was that the party made the plunge, not, as Ketabu supposed, in a state of helplessness, but in perfect freedom of limb. The light craft poised for an instant on the brink of the chasm, and then went down with a sudden, sickening leap.

To the great surprise of all the drop was a short one. Instead of pouring over a precipice

a hundred feet in height, as it did in entering the valley, the stream simply tumbled down a ledge into a deep basin which lay scarcely thirty feet below. This fact was not noticeable from above, owing to the way in which the cliffs shut in the bed of the stream.

In its descent the boat turned completely over, spilling its occupants broadcast, so that they struck the water entirely unencumbered. The force of their fall sent them far below the surface, to which they rose again presently, breathless and spluttering.

The first thought of each of the three Americans was for Mildred, and they all hastened to her aid. Dr. Thornton chanced to be nearer than the others, and was soon beside her, whereupon the lads gave their attention to the old woman, who was making a feeble struggle to keep herself afloat.

They had barely reached her side when there came a low call off to the right, and, glancing in the direction of the sound, they, to their astonishment, saw Semessi standing at the edge of a

long shelf of rock which, rising six inches above the level of the pool, extended for some distance from the foot of the rocky wall. When the chief had attracted the attention of the two swimming boys, he pointed out into the center of the basin uttering the single word: "Canoe."

A look revealed the little craft, floating bottom up on the water, and Harrie quickly realized that it must be secured at once. Leaving his friend to support Koloka, he swam out until he was able to seize the boat, and then, pushing it before him, he returned to the shore, where his companions were already standing. As he clambered out upon the rocky platform, the physician came to his aid, and they drew the vessel up beside them.

Meanwhile Mildred had been holding an animated conversation with Semessi, and now turned a smiling face to her companions as she explained to them the old man's unexpected presence.

"He was true to us after all," she said joyously.

"You see, he saw that it would be impossible for us to escape from the valley by way of the pass, since Ketabu was so powerful, and that some other plan must be devised.

"The older chief knew that this fall was not so great as was generally supposed, and he was also acquainted with a rough path which leads down to this platform. It is known to but a few of the older men, and so he proposed the manner in which our death sentence was to be executed, trusting to avoid suspicion, and yet save us.

"Then during the night he brought these provisions down here"—pointing to a small mound of food—"and arranged with Koloka for her to take the part which she carried out so successfully. He is here to go with us to the coast, for he says that he will not leave me," and she gave the native a bright smile.

"We little thought an hour ago that our deliverance was so near at hand," remarked Leigh.

"No, indeed," assented Harrie, "and if we

had been told it was so, we would not have believed it."

"I, for one, am sincerely sorry that I ever doubted Semessi, and accused him of being a turncoat," Dr. Thornton added cordially.

"Does he know anything about the course of the river below here?" his son inquired.

The chief shook his head as he returned:

"Not know."

"Then we still have an uncertain venture before us," the lad resumed. "But after our recent experience I shall not lose faith so easily again."

"I think we can all say the same," the physician said. "And we surely have cause for gratitude that a kind providence has so far watched over us, sparing our lives."

"Semessi has brought enough food to last us for several days," Mildred announced, "and also a few weapons—bows and arrows, and spears. So that we should be able to secure food when we reach the plains below."

"If we are able to reach them," Leigh put in;

"I should think that the canoe would be badly damaged by its plunge."

"We can easily find out," the Doctor answered, bending over the stranded craft.

A careful examination showed that the boat had been injured but little in its descent. The outrigger was pulled free from its fastenings at the bow, but otherwise no harm had been done. A few moments work had sufficed to make the needed repairs, and then the craft was in a condition to resume its voyage.

"What are we to do for paddles?" asked Harrie when they had completed their task.

"That's so," cried Leigh. "We won't get far without them."

"Here some," the chief returned, producing from the pile of articles a couple of the desired implements of the usual rude native make.

"Those aren't much to look at," the lad remarked disgustedly, "but I guess they'll have to answer."

As there was no way of making a fire upon the ledge and the party were shivering from their

involuntary bath, for the air of the canyon was cool, it was deemed best to embark at once on the journey down the river, and proceed until a more suitable landing place should be found.

Accordingly the canoe was launched, and the lads held its bow and stern while the physician and Semessi stowed on board the small store of provisions which the native had provided. Then the voyagers took their places in turn. The boat was not large, and the six people made a heavy load, yet all went well as they pushed away from the rocky platform, and the stream swept them around a corner of the wall.

On either hand the cliffs rose sheer from the water's edge to a considerable height. Not a cranny or crevice broke their perpendicular sides. The current was swift but smooth, and the canoe darted on at a rapid rate. All that was required of the native, who sat in the stern and grasped the paddle, was to keep the little vessel in the middle of the river.

On and on they went. Higher and higher rose the beetling walls of stone, grey and for-

bidding. So lofty were they that the light penetrated but dimly to the depths where the waters coursed, and the air was damp and chill.

Mile after mile was passed in silence. The occupants of the canoe grew stiff and cramped from their uncomfortable positions. And still there were no signs that the end of the canyon was nearer than when they had first set forth.

At length, when the forenoon was well advanced, they rounded a curve beyond which the cliffs receded from the river's brink, leaving a pebbly margin between the shore and their base. Then their height gradually grew less, until, a half hour later, the stream emerged into a valley, shut in by low hills, and whose floor was carpeted with thick grass.

Semessi guided the craft to a narrow strip of sandy beach, and there the party disembarked. Pulling the canoe well up on the shore, the chief left his companions to start a fire while he, taking bow and arrows, went off towards a grove a short distance away.

From a nearby thicket the two lads secured

the necessary fuel, and Dr. Thornton produced his match box. Fortunately it had proved water tight, and the dozen matches it contained were in good condition. One of these was quickly made use of, and a cheery blaze was shortly sending out its warmth.

They gathered in a little circle about it, endeavoring to remove the moisture from their drenched garments, and were thus engaged when Semessi returned, bringing a couple of large crested pigeons, which weighed three pounds or more each. These he at once proceeded to dress, and, when broiled over the fire, they formed the basis of a most appetizing meal, supplemented by the yams roasted in the ashes.

When their hunger had been appeased, and their clothing had been dried as thoroughly as circumstances would allow, a consultation was held as to the course which they should follow.

"Thanks to Ketabu and Semessi," Dr. Thornton began, "the great question of how we were to leave the valley has been settled for us, and we are now well away from its boundaries.

But we must still be at least two hundred miles from the south coast in a straight line. So there lies before us the task of traversing that distance."

"Say rather," interposed his son, "that we shall have to travel from three to four hundred miles through the wilderness, for we will not be able to follow a direct route to the sea."

"You are right," was the response. "Still, the problem remains to be solved. Is Semessi acquainted with this section of the country?" and he looked inquiringly at Mildred.

It was the chief himself who answered, and by a brief negative. Then Harrie spoke again.

"It makes little difference," he said. "Here is the river. It doubtless runs to the sea. We have only to follow to reach the same goal. And then, too, we have Leigh's compass, which I see is still attached to his watch chain."

"Very true," the physician assented. "Yet it might prove of value to us did Semessi know something of the tribes which are to be encountered in the region through which we must

pass. However, we can do nothing under the circumstances except to go on down the stream, trusting that we shall escape unmolested. As you say, such a course will eventually bring us to the coast."

"And voyaging in the canoe will prove much pleasanter for Mildred than tramping through the underbrush," Leigh remarked. "That is still another consideration which counts in favor of this plan."

"You will not try to go on to-day, will you?" asked the young girl.

"No," the gentleman answered. "It is already late, and we are all in need of rest. We could not find a more suitable place to spend the night than this. We will make our camp here."

In accordance with the decision a rude shelter of brush was erected for Mildred and Koloka, and a goodly supply of fire wood was collected for use during the night. Evening was at hand by the time these arrangements were completed, and the party were soon asleep—the queen and

her nurse within the hut, the others stretched before the fire, save for Dr. Thornton, who stood the first watch.

The night passed quietly, and at dawn the campers were astir. Breakfast was quickly eaten, and as the sun sent his first beams over the neighboring hills the journey to the coast was begun—a journey which was to consume long, weary weeks, and to try the endurance of each and all to the utmost limit.

PART II.

IN THE WILDS.

CHAPTER I.

A STERN CHASE.

For nearly a week the wanderers continued their voyage down the river without interruption and without accident. During the first two days the stream wonnd in and out among the low foot-hills, whose rounded summits rose on all sides in picturesque confusion.

For the most part these spurs of the loftier ranges to the north were covered with dense forests of semi-tropical growth, but here and there were occasional slopes free from all trees, while in the valleys which nestled at their feet were fair expanses of meadow, or more open groves.

Each night the canoe was made fast to the bank and a rude camp was built on shore. This consisted of a small brush hut for Mildred and the old native woman, and a windbreak of the same material in whose shelter the other members of the party slept beside the fire, which was kept burning all night. This was done not alone as a matter of protection, but because the night air was chilly, even though they were far within the tropics.

They did not lack for food, as there was an abundance of small game, including the curious little cuscus. This is a sleepy-looking animal, about the size of a full grown cat, with beautiful silky fur, and a long, flexible tail. The latter is naked for the outer two-thirds of its length, and serves the purpose of a fifth foot, enabling the owner to hang from the limbs of the trees in which it makes its home.

Semessi informed the Americans that the creature remained hidden in some sheltered nook during the day, to go abroad after dark in search of the fruits, flowers, leaves and in-

sects upon which it fed. The old chief secured a number of them at different times, and the party found them to be most excellent eating.

Then there were the innumerable feathered folk with which the forest teemed, and upon which they drew for further additions to their larder. Most important among these were the many varieties of pigeons, especially the beautiful crowned pigeons, the largest of their kind, often weighing more than three pounds each.

Near one of their camping places Mildred discovered a bed of wild strawberries, which were of fair size and a most delicious flavor. She called the lads to her aid, and the trio easily secured a number of quarts of the luscious fruit. A part of these furnished a pleasing addition to their evening meal, while the remainder, packed in grass baskets of Koloka's make, were carried with them for future use.

On the afternoon of the third day the current of the river, which, while often swift, had hitherto been smooth, became more turbulent, and was soon boiling and seething among the bould-

ers which lined its bed at this point. The handling of the canoe now became difficult, and as the speed continued to increase the faces of the greater part of the voyagers grew grave.

Semessi alone seemed undisturbed by the danger, and wielded his paddle with consummate skill. A half hour's progress through the rapids brought them once more to quieter waters, and just before nightfall the stream emerged into a level plain, where it flowed placidly on between tree-lined banks.

The current now became slow and sluggish, so that both paddles were called into use, and even then the advance was at a much slower rate than while among the hills. That night they were able to land as usual upon the river shore of their camp; but on the next the banks on either hand were low and marshy. The party were therefore compelled to spend the hours of darkness in the canoe, which was secured to a partially submerged log some distance out in the stream. So narrow and cramped were their quarters that there was little rest for any one,

and as soon as the first glimmerings of dawn were at hand they started onward.

The third day they were more fortunate, for just at evening they reached an opening in the forest, while the shore rose to a considerable height from the water's edge. Here they stopped for the night, and here it was that the boys met with an adventure which came near terminating in disaster.

When the camp was nearly completed Harry and Leigh took their bows and arrows, and crossing the open space, entered the forest beyond in search of beast or fowl for the coming meal. They had advanced but a short distance among the trees, when their attention was attracted by a slight noise, as of some animal feeding among the undergrowth off to the right. Cautiously moving nearer they were at length able to make out a large wild pig, rooting among the low bushes.

Neither of the lads stopped to think that the creature might prove to be a dangerous foe if wounded. To them it was simply a pig, and

therefore a most desirable addition to their bill of fare. So taking as careful an aim as the surroundings and the growing dusk would permit, they let fly their arrows together.

The shafts struck the animal in the side, and not far apart, but did not inflict a serious wound. They did serve, however, to arouse the fury of the beast, and turning, he rushed towards the young sportsmen, grunting and snapping his jaws savagely. It was then that they saw the ugly tusks with which he was armed, and realized their own folly in attacking him with the small weapons which they possessed.

There was but one thing to be done, since the trees were too large for climbing, and that was to make a speedy retreat. This the youths immediately proceeded to do. But their antagonist proved to be of greater speed than they, so that they soon found themselves compelled to make a stand. Harrie turned first, and discharged his second arrow full in the pig's face.

It glanced off, however, inflicting simply a skin wound. Leigh then shot his shaft, which

passed through the fleshy part of the face, but did no serious injury. The animal was now close upon them, and it was only by leaping quickly to one side that the lads saved themselves from his charge.

Their assailant rushed past, but turned immediately, to dash back towards Leigh, who stood somewhat nearer than his companion. Harrie fitted his last arrow to the string, and as the pig came up, sent it with great force and precision. It struck just behind the foreleg, and, penetrating the thick hide, reached the heart. With a last defiant squeal the beast dropped to the ground, lifeless.

"My, but that was a close call!" Leigh cried as his friend hastened up. "I did not have any more arrows, and if you had missed the old fellow, he would have made short work of me, I'm afraid."

"It will teach us not to attack such big game with such ineffective weapons another time," Harrie made answer.

"Yes," was the response. "But let us drag

this chap back to camp. He'll make us several meals, unless I'm greatly mistaken."

Each seized the carcass by one of its legs, and so, dragging it behind them, they returned to their companions. There were many exclamations of surprise over the capture, and also a few words of warning from Dr. Thornton when he heard the story the lads had to tell. The flesh proved, as they had anticipated, to be very palatable, and provided them with food for several days, although they discarded all but the choicest portions.

It was on the eighth morning after their passage of the falls that the voyagers, rounding a point of land which jutted far out into the stream, found themselves upon a large lake, whose waters stretched away to the east and south to such a distance that the farther shore was but dimly discernible. The two lads, who were wielding the paddles, stopped in amazement, allowing the canoe to drift unhindered, while all gazed in admiration at the broad ex-

panse of water. After a moment the physician turned to the chief, inquiring:

"Do you know anything about this lake, Semessi?"

"No," was the brief response. "Never saw before."

"Then of course you have no idea of the direction in which we must go to find its outlet?" the gentleman continued.

The native shook his head silently.

"It's rather a perplexing problem for us, to tell where it is best for us to go," his questioner said slowly.

"Why so?" asked Leigh. "Can we not skirt the shore, and thus be sure of finding the point where the stream leaves?"

"Certainly," was the reply. "But you can see for yourself how large the lake is, and can understand that it might take us weeks to accomplish our purpose."

"Why not proceed directly to the south shore?" suggested Harrie.

"For what reason?" his father questioned.

"Because it seems to me that we shall be more likely to find the outlet there than anywhere else," the lad responded.

"Perhaps you are right," Dr. Thornton remarked thoughtfully. "It is hardly probable that the stream makes its exit to the north at any rate."

"Exactly," the boy went on, "while there is every reason for believing that it would leave to the south or southeast. Or so it seems to me."

"We can lose very little time by crossing to the other shore and beginning there," Mildred put in. "Why not do so?"

"We will," the physician said, decisively. "It is certainly the best plan."

The lads dipped their blades once more, and the little craft moved slowly forward, the course being shaped by the compass attached to Leigh's watch chain. Perhaps a mile had been covered, when Mildred, who was gazing back towards the receding shore, exclaimed in a tone of alarm:

"See! Yonder is a canoe full of natives!"

Her companions turned quickly and saw to their consternation that a large boat filled with savages had left the land and was pulling out into the lake. It was hardly more than a half mile away, and apparently headed directly towards them.

"I wonder if they have seen us?" Harrie questioned anxiously.

"Possibly not," his father answered. "They may be simply coming out for fish."

"In either case we must get away from here at once," the boy declared. "Do your best, Leigh," he added as they fell to work.

The canoe made good progress under their vigorous strokes. For some time it was impossible to tell whether the natives were in pursuit, or had simply chanced to be coming towards them. Within the first fifteen minutes, however, all doubt was dispelled. That the fugitives had been seen, and that the tribesmen had given chase was shown by the efforts the latter made to overtake the fleeing craft.

Slowly but surely the pursuers drew nearer

their prey. Soon they were close enough for the Americans to see that there were eight of the natives. Six were propelling the canoe with their paddles, while the other two held their weapons in their hands.

As they came within bow-shot these two men let fly their arrows, which went wide of their mark. A terrific howl of rage went up from the band, while those at the paddles redoubled their efforts. Harrie and Leigh were already putting forth their utmost endeavor, but their boat was heavily loaded, and there were but two of them, against three times that number who were urging on the larger craft.

After a brief interval the pursuers shot again, and this time came near to hitting the canoe. Semessi, who was in the stern, had picked up his own weapons, and sat facing the oncoming vessel with impassive face. Presently he raised his bow and took careful aim. The light shaft sped true, and the fellow in the bow of the other boat tumbled over backwards, pierced through the throat.

His fall threw his comrades into a momentary confusion, and they ceased paddling while they bent over the injured man. This allowed the fugitives to make a considerable gain. But the natives quickly resumed the chase, and pressed on with increased speed. Again they drew near enough for a shot, and their arrows whistled by uncomfortably close to the heads of Dr. Thornton and his companions.

Once more Semessi let fly at the enemy, and with equal success, for a second victim fell before his shaft. The pursuing canoe immediately came to a halt and its occupants seemed to be holding a consultation. Then they came on at a speed which quickly regained all they had lost by the delay, and lessened the distance between the two craft to an alarming degree. They then laid aside their paddles, and, picking up their weapons, all six discharged their arrows simultaneously.

It was a most disastrous volley for the fugitives. Three of the missiles fell short; a fourth struck the paddle which Harrie held, knocking

it from his grasp; another lodged in the side of the boat; while the sixth pierced old Koloka's shoulder.

CHAPTER II.

A SAD EXPERIENCE.

Desperate as the situation seemed at this moment, the little party did not give up their struggle. Semessi had already strung another arrow, while Mildred and Dr. Thornton picked up the two unused bows from the bottom of the boat, and made ready to shoot. The three shafts must have been heaven-directed, for all were effective. The old chief's lodged, as each of his others had done, in the throat of his victim; the girl's sped straight to the eye of another; and the physician's quivered in the breast of a third.

Meanwhile Harrie had recovered his paddle, and the canoe again sped forward. This time the natives made no attempt to resume the

chase. Apparently they had had all the fighting they cared for. But three of their number remained uninjured, while two at least were seriously wounded, and they slowly withdrew, allowing the fugitives to escape unhindered.

When the fleeing craft had covered some distance, and Dr. Thornton perceived that the pursuers had really abandoned the attack, he ordered the lads to cease paddling while he attended to Koloka's wound. The old woman had borne her injury without a murmur, and now submitted herself readily to the gentleman's ministrations. He found that the weapon was firmly embedded in the flesh, and resisted all his efforts to withdraw it. Turning, therefore, to Mildred, he said:

"Ask Koloka if she can bear the pain of having the shaft cut out? There's no other way, for it has penetrated beyond the head, which I'm afraid might come off in the wound should I attempt to pull it out. Unfortunately I have nothing but my penknife, and I shall probably cause her considerable pain."

The girl explained the situation to her old friend, who readily assented to the suggested arrangement. Then the physician drew from his pocket the small knife which, through all his wanderings he had managed to keep, and, after carefully cleansing the blade, proceeded to make a number of incisions around the arrow. This enabled him to withdraw it from the shoulder, and he held it out for the inspection of Semessi.

The head was formed of a long, slender bit of bone, sharp as a needle. This was secured to the shaft by a wrapping of fine twine, which was in turn covered with a coating of bluish-colored gum. No sooner had Koloka seen this weapon than she gave a shriek of fear, and began to sob hysterically.

Dr. Thornton glanced in some surprise at the chief, as though asking an explanation of his patient's conduct. The native took the outstretched arrow gravely, but said nothing. So the gentleman appealed to Mildred, who answered, soberly enough.

"It is a poisoned arrow, and Koloka is badly frightened. The natives believe that it is sure death if one enters the flesh."

The physician gave a low exclamation of dismay, and turned again to the injured shoulder. He examined the flesh carefully, removing several fine particles of bone which had broken off from the head of the arrow, and washed the wound with the clear lake water. Then he said:

"I can see no reason why there should be fatal results. The hurt has bled freely, and I have thoroughly cleansed it. I do not believe that any poison from the weapon has entered the blood, though had the head remained in the flesh it could easily have caused a serious sore. Tell Koloka not to be alarmed, she will recover in a short time. But I must have something with which to bind up the shoulder."

Nothing could be found which would serve the purpose better than a piece of the old woman's grass petticoat. With this a rude bandage was arranged, and then the trip was resumed.

It was an anxious party, however, who

scanned the southern lake shore as they drew near. Like the one from which they came, it was covered with a dense forest growth, which rose, silent and sombre, directly from the water's edge. Whether or not there lurked among the shadows there those who would greet the newcomers with the winged messengers of death, was the question uppermost in every mind as the canoe slowly and cautiously approached the land.

Not a sound broke the stillness save the dip of the paddles and the soft ripple of the water as the craft moved forward. Nowhere were there signs of the dreaded natives, and presently the little vessel reached the shore. It was now late in the afternoon and as the lads ceased paddling the boat lay in the long shadows cast by the lofty tree trunks far out over the placid surface of the lake, which lay like a silver mirror in its setting of deepest green.

The forest and the shore ended abruptly together; there was no beach; thick masses of undergrowth filled the spaces between the taller

trees; nowhere was there a spot where human foot could find a landing. So, after a low-toned conversation, progress was resumed, the canoe being headed toward the east, whither the shore line extended in a long, broken curve. They kept well within the shadows, and proceeded with the utmost caution. Who could tell but that a native village lay beyond the next bend of the shore?

An hour went by. The boat still crept on, around one wooded point after another, without coming upon the clustered huts which the party dreaded, yet expected to see. It was beginning to be a question whether a suitable camping place could be found. At last, when darkness was almost at hand, a narrow inlet opened before them, and into it the wanderers turned. A short distance up its winding course they came to the spot they were seeking.

Upon the right there was a small, open glade, perhaps a half acre in extent. A few rods farther on the creek came to an abrupt end. On all sides the densest of thickets came to the

water's edge, cutting off all approach save by the tortuous passage from the lake. Thus a secure and comfortable refuge was afforded the party where they might rest in safety.

Such arrangements as could be made for the night were speedily attended to, and all were soon at rest. Sunrise found them astir, however, and preparing to continue their journey. They had embarked, and were already nearing the entrance of the inlet, when Harrie raised a warning hand. The canoe came to a standstill, while all listened eagerly, to hear the sound of human voices, faint and far away, but growing louder and clearer.

The lads turned the bow of the boat shoreward, and ran in under the overhanging bows of a nearby tree. Here they were screened from observation, but had a view of the part of the lake in their immediate neighborhood.

The voices were now near at hand, and the listeners could distinguish the discordant, wailing cries of women. Louder grew the sounds of grief, and presently a canoe, propelled by

two men, came in sight. In the center of the craft lay the outstretched body of a woman, strewn with garlands of wild flowers. Behind this first canoe came several others, at regular intervals, each one filled with natives, both men and women. All were painted a dull black—face, hands, arms, lower limbs, all visible portions of the body were alike smeared with the greasy-looking substance—and the females were giving vent to their sorrow in loud and vehement weeping.

With slow and measured strokes of the paddles the little fleet passed out of view, and the hideous noises died away in the distance.

"What was that—a funeral procession?" Leigh asked.

Mildred nodded. "They were taking the woman back to her native village for burial," she explained.

"I don't understand," the lad said in a puzzled tone.

"Why, when a tribe is large, it sometimes contains a number of hamlets. A man who

lives in one may marry a woman belonging to another. When the wife dies, she is taken back to her birthplace to be buried."

There was a brief interval of silence, broken at length by Dr. Thornton.

"It will hardly be safe for us to venture out upon the lake for the present," he remarked.

"How so?" Leigh inquired.

"Because it is evident that there is a town on either side of us," the gentleman answered. "It would only mean discovery were we to continue our voyage during the day."

"What can we do, then?" was the question.

"We must wait until night," replied the Doctor.

"But will we not run the risk of passing the outlet in the darkness?" Harrie interposed.

"There will be that danger," his father admitted, "though even that is preferable to being taken prisoners again."

"We might as well be captured as to go on around this lake forever," the youth objected.

"I think you overestimate the chances of

passing the outlet," the physician returned. "The outflow from a body of water so large as this would naturally be a river of considerable volume, which we could not easily overlook, even in the night."

During the conversation the canoe had returned to the camping ground, and all now disembarked. An hour or two passed quietly, and then the lads began to chafe under the restraint of their narrow quarters. After walking aimlessly up and down the little opening for a number of times, Harrie took a seat upon the ground and proceeded to manufacture, from a small, threadlike vine and a number of large thorns, a rude fishing line. He then provided himself with several fat worms, which he found by overturning the leafy soil at the edge of the thicket, and, entering the canoe, pushed out from the shore to try his luck.

Leigh watched these movements with interested eyes, and when he saw his friend pull in a good-sizd fish, he speeedily set to work to emulate his example. As soon as his tackle was

completed he called to Harrie to come ashore and take him in. The request was complied with, and for several hours the sport continued, until half a hundred of the finny tribe were lying in the bottom of the canoe.

When at length the lads tired of the amusement all except the largest were returned to their native element, leaving a score or more for the use of the voyagers. A fire was kindled, though with some misgivings, and the savory odor of the cooking fish soon pervaded the glade, adding to the appetites which the party already possessed.

When evening came, after what seemed an interminable day, the wanderers once more embarked, and set forth on their perilous venture. Leaving the little creek which had afforded them so kindly a shelter, they turned to the east, as the direction in which they would be most likely to find the outlet of the lake.

The night was dark and cloudy; a thin mist hung over the water; and the bordering trees rose in ghostly silence from the mirrorlike ex-

panse. The canoe was held close in to the shore, and the advance was in absolute quiet. So carefully did the lads dip their paddles that scarcely a ripple broke the stillness.

It was about midnight that the barking of a dog was borne to their ears from some point not far ahead. Semessi at once announced that a village was near at hand, and that they must turn out into the lake. His advice was followed, and not until they believed themselves well beyond the danger did they return to the vicinity of the shore again.

As dawn began to tinge the horizon with color the canoe was directed up a small cove which seemed to promise protection during the day. As the light increased, however, the voyagers found that, though safe from view of passing boats outside, there was no landing place, and they were therefore compelled to pass the day in the canoe.

When darkness again shut down the journey was resumed, and continued throughout the night without event other than the successful

passing of two or three small villages. Day found them snugly ensconced in a tiny inlet, where a knoll, bare of trees and carpeted with soft grass, sloped upward from the water.

Here they were destined to remain some days. Towards evening Dr. Thornton noticed a strange expression on Koloka's face, and after watching her keenly for several moments, he abruptly inquired if she felt ill.

For an instant the old woman hesitated, and then she answered in the affirmative, adding:

"It is the poisoned arrow."

The physician looked grave, but made minute inquiries, through Mildred, as to the exact symptoms which had made themselves felt. He found that there was a soreness and stiffness about the muscles of the jaw, and extending down into the neck. When he had completed his examination he rose silently and beckoned Mildred to come one side with him.

"I'm afraid your friend is going to be seriously ill," he began in a low tone. "Whether it is a result of the poison upon the arrow-head,

or comes simply from the opportunity offered by the wound for the lodgment of the germs, I can not say, but Koloka certainly has pronounced symptoms of tetanus, or lockjaw. I am powerless to help her, though if I had remedies at hand I might relieve her sufferings somewhat. As it is, I believe it best to warn you to expect the worst."

The girl nodded silently, but made no verbal reply.

Before nightfall the condition of the native woman had become alarming. The jaws became locked, there were constant spasms of the muscles in the face and limbs. As the severity of the attack increased, the body became bent nearly double, and the temperature rose to a high degree.

It was a heart-rending sight, and to think that they must stand helpless while their friend suffered before their eyes increased the sorrow of each member of the little group. Even Semessi, stern and self-possessed as he ordinarily was, showed the effects of the emotion which strove

within him. In the intervals between the spasms Koloka turned her eyes pleadingly towards her young mistress's face, as though intreating her to relieve the agony.

Thus the night and the following day passed. The contortions became more violent and of greater frequency, while it was plain that Koloka's strength was fast failing under the terrible strain. The second night came and went, and still the anxious watchers waited in mute helplessness. Just at dawn the end came. With a last convulsive shudder the faithful soul took its flight from the bent and rigid body.

Worn out by her long vigils and the sufferings she had witnessed, Mildred gave way to passionate weeping, while even the lads could not restrain the tears which rose unbidden to their eyes.

Back from the shore, near the edge of the forest, a shallow grave was dug, and lined with leaves. Tenderly they laid the silent form within it, and, after a brief prayer by the physician, covered it over with the soft brown earth.

As they turned sadly away their minds were filled with thoughts of the unknown dangers which still awaited them, and each one wondered if he, too, was to find a grave in the wilds.

CHAPTER III.

A SERIOUS MISHAP.

It was not far from noon when the wanderers again seated themselves upon the bank of the stream. Deeming it wiser to turn the minds of his companions from the sad scenes through which they had just been passing, Dr. Thornton at once brought up the subject of their next move. During the preceding night Semessi had taken the canoe and gone on a scouting trip along the shore to the east. Upon his return he had informed the physician that he had discovered the outlet for which they were looking. None of the other members of the party were aware of this fact, however.

The gentleman now made known this bit of information by saying:

"Semessi has found the point where the river leaves the lake."

"Where is it? How far away?" cried the lads eagerly, while Mildred turned an interested face towards him.

"It is not more than a three hours' voyage in the canoe," was the reply.

"How did he find it?" Leigh asked.

"By looking for it," Dr. Thornton answered with a smile; then he explained the old chief's reconnoitering excursion and its outcome.

"There is one difficulty in the way of our escape, however," he added.

"What is that?" questioned Harrie.

"The fact that there is a large village between us and the river, and a second at the point where the stream takes its departure."

"Whew!" ejaculated Leigh with a blank look "That makes it rather dangerous, doesn't it?"

"No more so than all our canoe trips since we reached the lake," his comrade rejoined. "If we use ordinary care we ought to be able to pass these two towns in safety."

"But either of them is larger than any we have met with before, according to Semessi's report," his father interposed, "and that certainly increases the risk."

"Well, since we've got to get by them, I don't see that discussion will do us any good," Harrie remarked. "All we can do is to go ahead and make the best of an awkward situation."

"That is very true," the physician assented, and then the conversation turned to other topics.

As the day drew to a close the sky became overcast, a brisk breeze sprang up, and, by the time the canoe left its hiding place, a fine rain was falling. As the boat turned down the coast the darkness was so intense that the party could scarce distinguish the outlines of the forest against the sky, and the continual lap, lap of the waves drowned completely the dip of the paddles.

"We couldn't have had a better night for our trip," Leigh remarked in a tone of satisfaction, as he and Harrie settled to their work.

"I'm not so sure about that," the other returned doubtfully. "To my mind it is almost too dark. We'll do well if we don't miss the outlet in this gloom."

And within the next hour Leigh had cause to come to the same conclusion. Blacker grew the night, until the little party in the canoe could barely see one another's forms. Twice the craft touched the bank before the occupants realized its close proximity. They proceeded at a veritable snail's pace, feeling their way foot by foot, yard by yard, around the jutting points of land. Several times they were tempted to turn back, and wait for more favorable conditions, but still they pressed on.

It was nearly three hours from the time of their start when the bow of the canoe bumped into what seemed a regular nest of poles, rising out of the water, and in which the lads' paddles became involved. Semessi uttered a low cry of warning, and at the same moment the barking of a dog broke forth, apparently directly above their heads. The alarm thus given was quickly

taken up by other animals, until a loud chorus of yelps and barks was going up on all sides.

"Good gracious!" Harrie ejaculated under his breath, as he struggled to release his paddle, which had caught between two stakes, "we have run right into the middle of the native village!"

His surmise was in a measure correct. In the darkness and storm the voyagers had blundered into the outskirts of the town, whose houses were built upon rude stagings raised three or four feet above the level of the lake. It was among the uprights supporting one of these aquatic residences that the canoe had struck.

"We must get away from here, and quick, too," Dr. Thornton commanded in a whisper. "The whole tribe will be upon us in another minute."

Even as he spoke the lads succeeded in freeing their paddles, and began to back their craft away from the dwelling, whose occupants could be heard stirring about over their heads. Farther away a canoe was bumping against the

poles as a crowd of natives took their places within it.

"Straight out into the lake," Harrie muttered as he wielded his paddle with desperate strokes.

Leigh made no reply, but bent to his work energetically. Fortunately the very darkness which had been the cause of their predicament, now aided them in their flight. The natives, though confident that an enemy was near, were not able to locate them on account of the gloom and the storm, whose noises completely swallowed up the slight sounds given forth by the fleeing canoe. Ten minutes of brisk work carried the fugitives entirely beyond the limits of the disturbance their blunder had created, although the barking of the dogs still came faintly to their ears.

"My, but that was a narrow escape!" Harrie remarked as he and Leigh paused to get their breath. "A little more and we would have been captured."

"And all because it was too dark," was his

companion's answer. "You were right, and I was wrong."

"Come, lads, we must not stay here," Dr. Thornton reminded them. "Let us push on beyond all possible chance of discovery."

Changing their course to one which was parallel with the shore, they went on until the scene of their misadventure lay far in their rear. Then they once more drew near the forest-lined bank. It was somewhat lighter now, for the clouds had thinned and the rain had lessened. They could even distinguish the tree-tops in a blurred outline against the sky. Progress was therefore a trifle less difficult, and an hour later they approached a long point which jutted straight out into the lake.

"Wait," Semessi said when he saw the cape. "Village 'round point. Must be careful."

The lads ceased paddling, while the Doctor inquired in a low tone:

"Is the village this side of the river, or across on the other shore?"

"This side," the chief answered. "Only little way off."

"Then we must circle out into the lake, and run down close to the other bank," the physician declared.

"Yes," assented the native, "that right."

The canoe again moved forward, heading well off shore. After a few minutes Semessi touched Harrie's shoulder softly.

"Go back now," he whispered.

The boy changed the course as desired, and soon the voyagers were aware that the shore, instead of being in front of them, as they had expected, was at their left, and Leigh exclaimed in a subdued voice:

"We are in the river! We are in the river!"

"Boy, keep still," was the chief's terse remark, and the youth suddenly lapsed into quiet.

The moments dragged slowly by, while the boat steadily advanced down stream. The town lay some distance behind them, and all seemed going well, when Dr. Thornton called out in a sharp whisper:

"Hist!"

Instantly the lads held their blades suspended in mid-air, while all listened intently. At first nothing could be heard except the low moaning of the wind in the tree-tops, but presently the soft, regular splash of paddles became audible, somewhere in advance of the wanderers. In breathless silence they awaited the oncoming boat. Misfortune seemed to be their lot; were they to be discovered after all, when the last danger had appeared to be behind them?

The steady dip, dip, of the paddles grew nearer and clearer. Then they could hear the ripple of the water against the bow of the canoe, and they knew that the natives were close at hand. A dark shadow loomed up against the night not three rods to the right. The anxious watchers could just make out five indistinct forms, and then the apparition faded away in the gloom from which it had come.

For a long time the party sat there motionless, scarce daring to breathe. At length the tension relaxed somewhat, and the two boys re-

sumed paddling. But not a word was spoken for nearly a half hour. Then Harrie exclaimed:

"Well, that was about the closest call we've had yet! It was bad enough when we ran into the village back yonder, but this took more nerve out of me than that, for some reason."

"Indeed it was a very trying situation," his father returned, "and one that might easily have resulted disastrously. One thing alone prevented our discovery."

"What was that?" Leigh asked.

"The fact that we were between the natives and the shore," the gentleman answered. "The dark background of the trees hindered them from seeing us, though we could see them."

"I wonder how many more adventures we are going to have to-night," Harrie remarked as the advance was resumed. "It seems to be a most eventful time."

"We will trust that these disagreeable happenings are over for the present," Dr. Thornton returned.

And his wish was gratified. During the remainder of the night the voyage continued without interruption. The new day found them well down the river, which had now become a broad, slow-moving stream. The banks on either hand were low and marshy, and covered with a thick, jungle-like growth, which made camping on shore an impossibility. For some time after the sun rose the party pushed on, hoping to come to firmer ground, but without success. At last Harrie said:

"It's no use, father, we must not keep on any farther. There's no knowing how soon we may come upon another village. We will have to find some little bend in the shore, behind which we can hide in the canoe until evening."

"You are right," his parent rejoined. "It will be rather unpleasant to remain in the boat all day, but it is our only safe course."

Accordingly the craft was directed into a tiny inlet, barely large enough to contain it, but where it was hidden by the thick foliage from chance passersby. Here they staid until dark-

ness again made it prudent for them to continue the journey.

The second morning found them in a similar situation, but with this additional discomfort—their food was nearly exhausted. The quantity brought from the valley had been small, and though they had added to it by hunting previous to their arrival at the lake, their sojourn there had reduced their provisions to scant proportions. Unless they reached open land very soon they would be reduced to the extremity of eating raw fish, for they still possessed the lines manufactured by the boys.

It was, therefore, with deep anxiety that they scanned the river banks as the third night drew to a close. As the sun rose, scattering the light mist which hung over the stream, a sigh of relief went up from each member of the party. The marsh had disappeared, and on either side the shore sloped back from the water to a range of low hills not far away. The forest growth, too, was more open, there was less underbrush, and occasional grassy meadows were to be seen.

A suitable place for camping soon presented itself, and the wanderers with thankful hearts set foot on shore once more. The canoe was drawn up among the trees, where prying eyes would not be likely to see it, and a fire was started in a glade a few rods back from the shore where a spring bubbled up beneath a wide-spreading tree. Semessi and the lads went in quest of game, and with such success that they were soon partaking of the most hearty meal they had eaten for nearly a week.

It was decided to remain in camp for a day or two, in order to take a brief rest, and also to accumulate a supply of food to carry with them. So they turned hunters, drying the surplus game in the smoke of their camp-fire. By the third evening all preparations had been completed, and they were once more ready to continue their trip down the river.

They set forth in excellent spirits, for it seemed that the greatest dangers had been met and passed. The lads, fresh and vigorous after their rest, sent the canoe forward with strong,

steady strokes which promised to carry them far on their way before morning.

Possibly their confident spirit made them careless, for certainly they did not keep their usual sharp lookout ahead. Had they done so the accident which befell them would never have occurred. As it was no one saw the half submerged tree top which lay in their path, until with a crash the boat struck forcibly upon one of the broken branches, staving a hole in the bow, through which the water poured in a swift stream.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEAD HUNTERS.

So QUICKLY did the accident happen that, almost before the occupants of the canoe were aware of their danger, the inrushing waters swamped their craft, which sank from under them, leaving them struggling in the stream. Instinctively they all struck out for the shore, dimly visible through the semi-darkness a few rods away. Dr. Thornton and Harrie came to Mildred's aid, and in a short time the entire party clambered out upon the bank.

"If we aren't a parcel of block-heads!" Leigh exclaimed as he wrung the water from his clothing. "Why didn't we have our wits about us enough to see where we were going?"

"It's easy to talk now the damage is done,"

Harrie returned, "but it won't mend the canoe, nor build a new one. So what's the use in grumbling?"

"That's right, my son," the physician commented. "Let us not get discouraged, even though the misfortune is due to our own carelessness. Another time we shall remember to be on our guard."

"Did we save anything at all?" queried the lad.

"Here bows and arrows," Semessi said, holding out two of the former and a half dozen of the latter. "Me grab 'em when canoe struck."

"And I have the other bow in my hand, I see," Dr. Thornton added, "though I have no recollection of picking it up."

"Then we are not entirely helpless," Harrie remarked in a tone of satisfaction. "With the three bows we are sure of food, for we can easily make more arrows."

"But our fire is gone," Leigh put in anxiously. "What are we to do without it?"

Ever since the physician had kindled their

first flame with one of his precious matches at the beginning of the flight, a few coals had been kept smouldering in an earthlined box at the bow of the canoe, and from it the successive camp-fires had been started. When the boat went down this, of course, was lost.

"I still have a few matches left," the gentleman returned, "and fortunately my match-safe is a water-proof one. We will start a blaze at once, and make ourselves comfortable for the night."

Ten minutes later the cheery flames were sending forth their grateful warmth, and brush had been collected for a rude shack into whose shelter Mildred could retire. When their garments had become dry, the entire party stretched themselves upon the bare earth and were soon sleeping soundly.

It was broad day when they awoke, lame and stiff, and rekindled the fire from the dying embers. A sally into the forest was rewarded by the capture of three small birds, which furnished a scanty meal. The morning was spent

in fashioning, under the old chief's guidance, a score or more of arrows, rude to be sure, because of lack of tools and material, yet weapons which were to be of great assistance in keeping their larder supplied.

The two lads also manufactured a couple of rude fishing lines, similar to those they had used while at the lake, and by their use procured a welcome addition to their dinner.

As they sat in a little circle upon the ground, working on the arrows, Leigh inquired:

"I suppose we will have to continue our journey on foot, will we not?"

"There is no other way," Dr. Thornton answered. "We have no tools with which to build a canoe, or even a raft."

"Will you follow the river, or strike off directly towards the south?" asked the lad.

"I am in favor of following the stream," the gentleman returned. "It may be a long road, but it is certainly a surer one."

"It may add a hundred miles to our trip, though," Leigh objected.

"Yes," Harrie assented, "but we are sure of passable traveling this way, while if we go straight to the south we may run in with mountains to climb, swamps to go around, or rivers to cross, and so never reach the coast at all."

"What do you think, Semessi?" and the physician glanced inquiringly at the chief.

"Best follow river," the native responded decidedly.

Thus the matter was settled, and shortly after noon the wanderers set forth along the shore. The forest at this point was open, and free from undergrowth, so that the advance was not difficult. By evening a number of miles had been covered, and they went into camp well pleased with the afternoon's progress.

Before leaving their landing place Mildred had woven a rough basket from long, slender twigs, and in this, upon a bed of soil, the coals had been carried with which they were to kindle their evening fire. This enabled them to keep the physician's little store of matches, now

numbering a bare half dozen, for use in case of an emergency.

In this manner the party journeyed on, pushing forward steadily, with only a brief stop at midday for rest and food. But they soon found that they must be more sparing of their strength. Since leaving the hills the heat had steadily increased, until now it was exceedingly oppressive during the hours immediately before and after noon.

The road, too, was extremely rough and fatiguing. In places the underbrush was so dense that wide detours had to be made from the river's brink, while again there would be long stretches of marshy ground, over which progress was not only difficult, but dangerous as well.

Accordingly the travelers made a change in the order of the day. They rose at dawn and, after a hasty lunch, pressed on until the middle of the forenoon. Then a halt was made for several hours, while the chief meal of the day was prepared and eaten. Then followed a time

of rest, and towards four o'clock the advance was resumed and continued until darkness came. This enabled them to make fair progress, without entailing the severe strain upon them that they endured under the former routine.

Yet it was with feelings of relief that, late on the fifth afternoon, they found themselves at the end of the forest. In its stead a wide, rolling plain stretched away to the distant horizon. It was covered with a tall, rank growth of coarse grass, and the deep green surface, swayed by the light breeze, resembled a broad expanse of ocean.

Through this plain the river wound its slow, sinuous way, a thin fringe of low bushes marking its course, while in the distance a range of hills could be seen, looming against the sky in a soft, purple haze. This was indeed a welcome relief to the wanderers after the gloom and monotony of the jungle. But they found that the change had its disadvantages, for the heat was even greater than before, and there

was no shelter from the pitiless, scorching sun, even when they halted for the noontide rest.

When night came they camped in the center of a small thicket near the river's bank, assigning to Leigh the watch until midnight, at which hour Harrie was to take his place.

Just what it was that caused the latter to wake he could not tell, but he suddenly found himself staring with wide open eyes at the fire, upon which his friend had just laid a fresh supply of fuel. Leigh was sitting before the blaze, his face supported on his hands, lost in thought; the other members of the party were sleeping quietly.

But the uncertain, flickering light revealed more than this to the half-aroused lad. It showed a dark form crouched in the bushes just behind the unsuspecting guard. The lurking shadow held in its hands a long, slender pole, which was stretched out towards the fire. At the end of the stick there was a large loop, and, as he watched in an indifferent way, Harrie saw that the fellow was striving to slip this

noose over Leigh's head. Instantly the boy was wide awake, and leaping to his feet with a loud shout, rushed towards the intruder.

At the alarm both man and pole vanished into the thicket, while the rest of the party, aroused by the cry, crowded about Harrie, demanding an explanation. He related briefly what had occurred, adding:

"I don't know what the chap was after, but he certainly seemed to be trying to slip the loop on the end of his pole over Leigh's head."

"He head hunter," Semessi explained, and then added to Mildred: "You tell 'em."

"Yes, tell us what a head hunter is," urged Harrie.

"Well, there are various tribes who practice head hunting," said the girl. "Their great desire is to secure as many human heads as possible, and the man who has the largest number is the one of greatest power. They endeavor to accomplish their purpose with as little danger to themselves as possible, and so use the instru-

ment you saw in the hands of the man who was trying for Leigh's head.

"It is called by the natives a man catcher. At the end of the rod, within the loop, there is a sharp prong about three inches in length. By throwing the noose over an enemy's head, and giving a quick backward jerk, this prong is driven into the back of the neck, causing almost instant death."

"Whew!" cried Leigh soberly. "It looks as though I must thank you for saving my life, Harrie. It was a close call," and he shuddered at the thought.

"Is there any danger of an immediate attack?" queried Dr. Thornton anxiously. "We must not allow them to take us off our guard."

"I hardly think there is cause for alarm," Mildred responded. "They are usually great cowards, and seldom care to risk an open fight. They prefer to steal up behind some unsuspecting traveler and capture the head with the aid of their man catcher."

"Then you think we have seen the last of the rascals?" Harrie asked.

"No," was the reply. "Very likely they will dog our trail for days, hoping for a chance to steal up unobserved and kill one of us. We shall need to be constantly on our guard. But I do not believe they will venture to attack us openly."

There was little sleep for the remainder of the night, and as soon as day dawned the party were moving, for a burning desire had come upon them to get as far away from the dangerous locality as possible. A sharp lookout was kept on all sides, for the tall grass formed a most excellent lurking place for the enemy.

Nothing was seen of the head hunters during the forenoon, but while the wanderers were eating their luncheon in the shade of a clump of trees, Leigh was confident that he caught a glimpse of a native skulking in the bushes which fringed the river shore. He was confirmed in his belief a little later by Harrie, who detected

a dark form crouched in the grass on the opposite side of the party.

"It's evident they are still watching us," was the lad's comment, "but so long as they don't make an attack we are all right."

"I'd rather they would not even watch us," said the father. "It is a most uncomfortable experience to feel that we are under constant surveillance, and that the least carelessness may bring death."

"By and by be more; then they fight," Semessi remarked grimly.

The others looked grave at this announcement; a gravity which was suddenly increased as, with a soft whirr, an arrow went sailing over their heads to strike the earth a few feet away. The chief instantly turned, and, picking up his bow, discharged a shaft at the moving grass where the native had been seen a moment before. Then he walked over to the spot where the arrow was still quivering in the ground. Pulling it free he gave it a brief glance, declaring tersely:

"Poisoned."

In silence his comrades inspected the weapon which he held out to them. It was the counterpart of the one which had caused Koloka's death, and a dread fell on each member of the party at the sight.

"Cowards!" muttered Harrie between his teeth, "to keep under cover themselves, and use every means to kill us, when we've done them no harm!"

"Is there any way we can drive them off?" questioned Leigh.

"None that I know of," Dr. Thornton returned. "We are helpless."

"And all because we were such fools as to lose our canoe!" the youth exclaimed bitterly.

"If they are going to kill us, I wish they would hurry and have it done with," Harrie remarked. "This suspense and uncertainty breaks a fellow all up."

But the head hunters made no further move. Their purpose had evidently been simply to alarm the wanderers. Nor were they seen

again during the day. As night came on Semessi seemed anxious and preoccupied, scanning the nearby landscape closely. At length his face lighted up and he led the way out upon a point which jutted out into the river.

"We camp here," he declared.

"Why here?" the physician asked.

"Make fire there," the native returned, indicating the narrow strip which connected the cape with the mainland. "Then they not get at us in dark."

"Sure enough!" the other exclaimed. "We shall be much safer here than where the enemy could attack us on all sides."

"But suppose they take to the river and swim out to the other end of the point? What then?" objected Harrie.

"We can build a fire there also," his father responded, "which will prevent their landing there unseen."

"Then we shall need to collect a larger supply of wood than usual," said the lad.

"Come, Leigh, we must hasten, for it will soon be dark."

From the neighboring thickets, and among the drift along the shore a huge pile of fuel was gathered. As soon as daylight faded the fires were started at either end of their refuge, while between them the brush hut was erected for Mildred. It was also decided to stand guard by twos as an additional precaution.

Whether this had any effect on the natives or not, they made no demonstration whatever, nor were there any signs of their presence in the morning. Nevertheless the travelers were not to be put off their guard, believing that the enemy were still on their track and only waiting for a more favorable opportunity to renew the attack.

Nor were they mistaken in this supposition. Late that afternoon, as they were entering the tract of broken country where the river pierced the range of low hills, Dr. Thornton turned and glanced back over the plain. From the knoll

on which he stood there was an extensive view, and as his eye slowly swept the horizon he gave utterance to a low cry.

His comrades hurried to his side, inquiring the cause of his alarm. In silence the physician pointed back in the direction from which they had just come. There, not over a mile away, and advancing towards them at a quick trot, they saw a score or more of natives.

CHAPTER V.

DELIVERANCE AND DANGER.

"They ready to fight now," was Semessi's grim comment, as his glance rested upon the advancing natives.

"You are right," Dr. Thornton returned. "And they will be up with us shortly. We must hasten on."

"But what advantage will there be in going farther?" Harrie asked. "They will overtake us in an hour at the most. Why not fight now, before we are tired out from our flight?"

"We go this way," the chief suggested, pointing away from the river. "Maybe we find place where we can fight better."

"Yes," chimed in Leigh, "and it may throw them off our track."

"Very well," assented the physician. "But we must be quick about it. We haven't over ten minutes left."

He led the way as he spoke towards the low, rounded hillocks which stretched away to the higher range a half mile distant. In and out among the boulders he wound his way, all the time glancing anxiously to the right and left for some nook or cranny which would afford a partial shelter from the attacks of the enemy. Five minutes passed, and then Semessi's keen eye found the place for which they were seeking.

"Here," he exclaimed, darting on before his companions, "this good."

The spot to which he called their attention was a semi-cavernous hollow in the side of a large knoll which rose abruptly from the surrounding level. Under the combined action of wind and weather an opening of considerable size had been scooped out in the loose gravel near its base, while the rocky structure of the mound above formed a shelving roof.

This pocket-like cave was of a size sufficient to shelter the entire party, and thus to prevent all possibility of attack save in front. Dr. Thornton's face lighted up as he took in the situation, and after a swift glance at the large stones with which the ground was covered, he cried:

"It is just the place! And if we work fast we can throw up a breastwork of these rocks before the natives catch up with us!"

He set the example by immediately picking up the nearest stone and placing it in position. His companions at once fell to work with a will, even Mildred lending her aid, in spite of the protests of the lads, and the rude barricade grew rapidly.

Ten minutes passed without any signs of the enemy. Fifteen went by and still they did not put in an appearance. In breathless haste the wanderers worked on. The fortifications were now breast high and, regarding them as completed, they ceased their endeavors.

"I guess we have thrown them off our trail

after all," Leigh remarked exultingly. "They must have kept right on down the river."

But even as they spoke a dark skinned warrior came in view around the nearest hillock. He sent up a shout of triumph at sight of the fugitives, who immediately retired into their stronghold, and there awaited the attack with fast beating hearts.

The man who had first appeared halted for his comrades to come up with him, and then the entire band advanced confidently towards the little party. Not until they were within a half dozen rods did they discover the defensive works which had been erected, and they came to a sudden standstill at the sight.

"They don't seem to like the looks of things," commented Leigh as he lay peering through the crevices in their hastily constructed wall. "Maybe they will give up the fight."

"They will be more likely to try to starve us out," Harrie retorted moodily. "It won't take them very long either, for we've but little food, and no water."

"That is just what they are planning to do," said his father. "See, they have spread out so as to form a big half circle, enclosing the front of the knoll, and are sitting down to wait for us to surrender."

"There's where they are wise," the lad returned. "They know that if they only wait long enough they will get our heads without endangering their own in the least. It's simply a question of time."

"We would have done better if we had kept right on down stream," Leigh remarked.

"I hardly think so," the physician answered. "They would soon have overtaken us, and a fight in the open would have increased the chances against us."

"They wait till dark," said Semessi. "Then they creep—creep up still and kill us all."

"Sure enough, they will be able to do that," the gentleman exclaimed, "for we have no means of making a fire. Shall we not try to force a passage through them?" and he glanced anxiously at Mildred.

The old chief shook his head slowly. "No use try that," was his decided reply. "They too many."

After this silence fell upon the little company for a time. The situation was indeed a serious one, seemingly the most desperate in which they had yet been placed, and death, grim, forbidding, stared them in the face. Nor did there seem to be the slightest possibility of relief. It was already past noon, and in a few hours the night, for whose friendly shades the head hunters were waiting, would be at hand. Then—.

As the moments dragged by and the natives remained quietly in the position which they had first assumed, the lads presently ventured to rise to their feet and glance out over the barricade. No notice was taken of their act, and as they once more seated themselves on the ground Leigh exclaimed bitterly:

"They are so sure of capturing us later that they don't even care to shoot at us now!"

No one made reply, and the silent waiting

was continued. About three o'clock Semessi, who had been watching the sky closely for some time, announced:

"Big storm coming. Drive men away."

His comrades glanced eagerly at the heavens, but could see nothing in the placid blue vault to warrant his conclusion.

"I guess you're mistaken about that," Harrie returned. "It doesn't look in the least as though it were going to rain."

"You see bimeby," was the confident answer.

Within the next half hour the Americans were forced to adopt his view. Thick, dun-colored clouds rolled up from the horizon and spread over the sky, causing a ghastly, unearthly light to take the place of the brilliant sunshine which had poured down in pitiless, scorching rays during the earlier portion of the day.

The light breeze died away entirely, and in its stead a strange, ominous calm pervaded the atmosphere. The air became heavy and stifling, so that one felt oppressed, and breathing be-

came difficult. As the clouds mounted higher the gloom deepened, until a semi-twilight shrouded the earth.

The wanderers could see that the natives were casting anxious looks skyward, and conferred together uneasily in twos and threes. Evidently the approaching tempest filled them with alarm.

By and by there came a low growl of thunder, accompanied by several short, fitful gusts of wind. The natives still waited, though plainly terrified by the threatening tumult of nature. They huddled together in a compact mass, and gave no further heed to the party within the cavern. A lurid flash of lightning, followed by a long crashing peal of thunder completed their demoralization, and they fled helter-skelter for some place of shelter.

"Thank God for that!" ejaculated Dr. Thornton fervently. "Let us be going at once, before they recover from their panic."

"No! no!" said Semessi earnestly. "Big

storm coming—must stay here. Bimeby we go on."

"But won't the head hunters return when the tempest is over?" questioned the gentleman in some anxiety.

"No," was the response. "They not come back—ever. They too scared."

With a fierce blast of wind the storm broke in full fury at this moment, and there was no longer any question as to whether they should remain or not. It would have been utter madness to have ventured from their rude shelter into the tumultuous, warring elements without, and the little party crouched in the farthest corner of their refuge, gazing with fascinated eyes at the tempest.

The rain came down in one vast, glistening sheet; flashes of lightning, vivid, unearthly, followed one another in such rapid succession as to form one continuous glare; the rolling, crashing peals of thunder were incessant; while the wind howled until it seemed as though ten

thousand demons had been let loose upon the helpless earth.

At first the refugees were snug enough in their subterranean retreat, but as the storm increased the water, penetrating the soil above, began to fall in muddy drops from the rocky ceiling of the cavity. Soon tiny, dirty streams were trickling down on all sides, rendering the position of the wanderers most disagreeable.

As the hours dragged on the little cavern became a veritable mud hole, and the crouching forms within took on a thin coating of the mire. Yet in spite of these discomforts their situation was ten times better than a complete exposure to the tempest, and they endured the inconvenience without a murmur.

The night wore on. With the early hours of the morning the storm began to abate. As rapidly as it had risen the tumult subsided. When the sun rose it was into a sky from which every cloud had vanished, while the wind had died away to the softest of breezes.

It was a sorry looking company which

emerged from the hollow in the hillside. Drenched to the skin; their clothing, already bearing marks of their long journey through the wilderness, covered with slime and mud; stiff and aching in every joint from their cramped quarters; they were indeed a pitiful spectacle.

Nevertheless their hearts were light, and their conversation was cheery as they hastened off towards the river. There they separated for a half hour, Mildred remaining at a secluded cove, while the others went a short distance farther down the stream. When they came together again it was with all signs of the storm removed from their persons and clothing.

The precious basket of coals had been lost during the experience of the night, and so they once more had recourse to the physician's match safe in order to kindle their fire. This was soon done and a meal was quickly prepared. While it was being eaten Leigh inquired:

"Then you think that the head hunters will not return, Semessi?"

"A sail! a sail!" he cried
(Page 347)

"They not come back any more," was the reply. "We safe now. They think storm demon angry."

"I sincerely trust that you are right," Dr. Thornton remarked. "The storm came most opportunely for us, and we have great cause for gratitude this morning."

When breakfast was over the march was taken up once more along the river bank. On every side traces of the recent tempest were to be seen. Huge trees, uprooted by the gale, lay stretched along the ground; others still stood, but with torn and twisted branches, a mere shadow of their former selves. Great gullies opened here and there, where the rush of water had carried away the soil. The undergrowth in many places was beaten flat by the power of the storm, while in others it had been torn up by the roots.

For a number of miles the river flowed through the rough, broken country which extended to the outskirts of the range of hills. Then it turned and pierced the heart of the

ridge, its course lying deep in a rocky gorge, whose sides rose, sheer and precipitous, directly from the edge of the stream.

This forced the wanderers to seek their pathway upon the hillside, along the edge of the canyon. Here they found the traveling exceedingly difficult, and struggled on at a slow rate for the remainder of the day. Evening found them still climbing, and, weary and footsore, they lay down in the shelter of a clump of bushes for the night. To add to their discomfort they had eaten their last morsel of food at noon, and were obliged to go supperless to their hard couch.

The next morning they resumed their tramp, hungry and discouraged, lamenting more than ever the loss of the canoe. Midday came and they were still toiling on. Dinner they had none, nor was there any chance of securing food. Hollow-eyed and silent the column pressed doggedly on with a determination born of despair.

With mid-afternoon the ravine widened into

a considerable valley, whose fair expanse seemed to mock at the wanderers with its promise of food and rest. In vain they sought for some means of descent into the paradise below; the rocky wall went down straight and smooth a hundred feet and more, affording no foothold whatever.

To add to their difficulty the hillside above them became more and more steep, until at length they were walking in single file along a narrow, sloping ledge, while a cliff towered above them on the left, and a precipice yawned on the right.

Presently, to their unspeakable joy, the pathway dipped downward, as though leading into the valley. Five minutes more and they were within twenty-five feet of the bottom, and hope beat high in every heart.

Then Leigh, who was at the head of the column, stepped upon a small, round stone. It rolled beneath his foot, throwing the lad forward and outward. He made a desperate effort

to save himself, but without avail, and with a sharp cry he disappeared from view down the side of the rocky wall.

CHAPTER VI.

HARRIE'S DISCOVERY.

As LEIGH'S form shot from their sight down the side of the hill the other members of the party halted in consternation. It was only for a moment, however. Then, with one accord, they rushed to the spot from which the lad had fallen, and peered anxiously over the ledge. They could see nothing, for a growth of shrubbery in a crevice part way down the wall hid its base from view, so, after a searching glance, they turned and hastened on down the pathway.

A few rods farther on it reached the level ground, and they sped back along the foot of the cliff, their hearts heavy with fear and dread. They had gone but a short distance when they came upon the youth, lying in the midst of a

clump of bushes. As they came up, he called out feebly:

"Here I am, what there is left of me."

"Thank God he is alive!" ejaculated Dr. Thornton fervently. Then he added quickly: "Are you much hurt?"

"I'm afraid my leg is broken," the boy answered, with a smothered groan. "Fortunately the thicket broke the force of my fall."

Harrie and his father forced their way through the underbrush to Leigh's side, and, taking him in their arms, carried him carefully out and laid him down upon the grass. His face and hands were scratched and bleeding from their contact with the bushes, and one leg hung helpless. The physician made a hasty examination, and then announced with a sigh of relief:

"Aside from the broken limb I think there are no serious injuries. You were very fortunate to escape so lightly, my boy."

Leigh made a wry face, and said with a gasp:

"I don't see that it is getting off so lightly, Doctor."

"I know it is a pretty bad hurt," the gentleman admitted, "but it is wonderful that you were not killed instantly."

"Yes, I suppose so," the lad assented, "and I am thankful that it is no worse."

"We must get this leg straightened out the first thing we do," remarked Dr. Thornton briskly as he cut away the clothing from the injured limb. "Harrie, will you see if you can find me some sticks that will answer for splints? And Mildred, if you will tear this trousers' leg into strips for bandages. There, that is right. Thank you."

As he talked the physician worked quickly and deftly, and in a short time the fracture had been reduced, and the leg encased in a rude bandage. Leigh bore the operation without flinching, though he got very white about the mouth, and the perspiration stood on his forehead in great drops. As the Doctor straightened up, he announced:

"There, that will do nicely now, I think, though it's rough and ready surgery. You did

nobly, my boy," and he laid his hand on the prostrate head affectionately.

The youth nodded his thanks, but did not trust himself to speak. After a moment of silence Harrie said:

"I suppose this means that we shall have to go into camp for a time, doesn't it?"

"Yes," his father responded. "Leigh will not be able to do much walking for the next eight weeks, so we may as well make a permanent camp at once."

"We couldn't have a much better place for it than right here," the lad went on. "This valley is an ideal spot, if only there are no natives around."

"It is a pleasant location," the gentleman assented, casting an admiring glance over the fair scene.

The valley stretched away to the south in ever-increasing width, until it became merged with the greater plain beyond the range. On either hand the masses of hill rose in a picturesque medley of peaks, some of bare grey

stone, others clad in a garment of living green. Through the center of the basin flowed the river, one side bordered with trees, while from the other the meadow sloped gently to the base of the cliff. At its lower end, however, the whole breadth of the valley was covered with dense forest growth.

"We must bestir ourselves, and make my patient here more comfortable," Dr. Thornton went on as his gaze returned to his immediate surroundings. "We will put up a rough brush shack for the present, just enough to keep off the sun during the day and the dampness at night. Later we can try our hand at a more substantial shelter."

The band set to work at once, and by sundown the camp began to take on a habitable look. Semessi discovered a spring a short distance away, and near this it was decided to take up their abode. There the rude brush hut was accordingly erected, Leigh was removed to its shelter, and laid upon a couch of boughs, which,

if not the softest, was at least more comfortable than the bare earth.

The chief also found time for a little hunting trip, from which he returned bearing a number of birds, which furnished a most welcome repast after the long fast of the wanderers. Night found them well prepared for its coming, and they went to their rest with hearts thankful that what had promised to be so great a disaster had had ended so fortunately.

They were astir at an early hour on the following morning, and then began a busy two weeks for the entire company. Though they possessed neither axe, hatchet, nor saw, yet they resolutely addressed themselves to the task of providing a suitable shelter in case of storm. A grove of tall and slender saplings had been laid prostrate by the recent tempest, and these furnished the materials for the hut. One by one they were trimmed of their branches, and then were brought to a uniform length by burning away one end in a slow fire.

With these poles, set upright in the ground

and bound together with lengths of vine, the four walls were formed. Then other rods were laid across the top to form a roof, slightly sloping to carry off the moisture. The entire outside of this structure was covered with a thick coating of clay, while the roof received an additional layer of turf.

Beside this larger building, which was about twelve feet square, a small lean-to was constructed for Mildred's sole use, and when the whole had been completed it formed a snug and comfortable camp. The wanderers were well pleased with their success, and regarded it as a highly satisfactory achievement, considering their lack of tools.

Meantime Leigh had been having a hard time of it. Forced to lie alone in the heat, upon a couch none too soft, while the others were busy at their work, these two weeks were most trying ones for the invalid. His hurt was doing nicely, however, and the physician expressed much gratification that no setback occurred from the lack of proper surgical facilities.

After the rush of house building was over the injured lad's position was a trifle more endurable. One or the other of his comrades was with him constantly, and many were the devices resorted to in order to pass away the tedious hours. Leigh appreciated the efforts of Harrie and his father, but there was no doubt as to his preference for Mildred's ministrations. The other lad finally declared that his friend did not want to get well, but wished to remain an invalid in order to be waited on by the young girl.

Thus the time passed more rapidly than they had believed possible. Every day Semessi and Harrie spent a number of hours in hunting or fishing, and all the game which they did not need for immediate consumption was smoked and dried for future use. Fortunately a plantation of wild yams was found a half mile or so down the river, which furnished a much relished supply of vegetables. The old chief was rather surprised at the discovery and declared that the valley must have been the home of some tribe years before, though there were no signs

of their presence, a fact which gave great satisfaction to the campers.

It was one afternoon in the latter part of their fifth week in the valley that Harrie went on the daily hunt alone. Semessi was busy making snares with which he hoped to capture some of the pigeons that were to be found in abundance in the forest across the river, and did not wish to leave until he had completed them, so the lad set off unaccompanied.

Instead of crossing the stream, as was their usual custom, the youth struck off along the bank to the south, impelled by a desire to explore the lower part of the valley, which up to this time none of the party had visited. He walked briskly along, bow and arrows in hand, with watchful eye for beast or bird which might prove acceptable to the camp cook.

In half an hour's time he had traversed the meadow land, and reached the edge of the grove which at this point extended from hill to hill on either side of the river. As yet he had been able to bring down nothing, and so he

pressed on into the forest, believing that there he would be sure to obtain the game he sought.

But for once the ever-present feathered population seemed to have vanished, for not one could the young hunter find, though he moved with the utmost caution. Knowing that he could easily retrace his steps to the river bank, and was therefore in no danger of becoming lost, Harrie continued to advance, reluctant to turn back until he had some trophy to carry with him.

He had already penetrated a half mile or more into the woods, when, through an opening in the trees, he caught sight of what seemed to be a stone building, or at least the ruins of a wall. The glimpse was only a fleeting one, but it aroused the curiosity of the youth, and he turned aside to investigate. A few steps and he again had a view, this time an unmistakable one, of some large structure among the tree trunks.

Thoroughly excited, he pushed on towards the ruins through the undergrowth which was

here quite dense. Now and again there came those tantalizing visions of towering walls, never seeming far away, but which came no nearer as he continued to advance. Presently, as the lad stepped upon what appeared to be a mound of dried brush and leaves, the mass gave way beneath him, and he felt himself rapidly sinking.

Instinctively he threw out his arms in an effort to save himself by catching at the edge of the cavity into which he was falling, but the rubbish which littered the ground afforded no permanent hold. With a last quick drop of some feet he reached the bottom of the hole, in the midst of the shower of debris which he had dislodged in his descent. He was considerably shaken by his tumble, and eyes and nostrils were full of the fine dust which rose in a cloud about him, but he was uninjured.

When he had recovered his breath and brushed the dirt from his face, the lad looked curiously about him to see what manner of place it was into which he had dropped so un-

expectedly. To his surprise he found that it was not, as he had supposed, a natural cavity, but instead was the work of man.

The opening was circular, nearly eight feet across, and the sides were faced with small, oblong stones, laid in regular courses like bricks. The floor, beneath the accumulated rubbish, was also paved with the little blocks. Glancing upward, Harrie saw that the top of this singular well was a trifle more than four feet above his head, so that the total depth could not have been far from ten feet.

Eagerly his eyes scanned the stone-work before him, seeking for some crevice which would afford a foothold by which he might climb to the upper air. But the masonry presented an unbroken surface, and he turned to inspect the part of the well which lay behind him. Immediately a low cry of surprise escaped him. A small doorway opened directly before him, narrow, arched at the top, and giving entrance to a dark passage leading off in the direction of

the ruins towards which he had been making his way.

"This begins to look interesting," Harrie ejaculated after a moment of speechless bewilderment. "I'd like to know where that tunnel leads."

As he spoke he approached the opening and peered earnestly into the darkness. At first he could distinguish nothing, but presently he thought that he detected a faint glimmering of light far in the distance. He glanced around him doubtfully, muttering under his breath:

"I've a mind to see where this goes. I can't get lost so long as it is one straight passage. Maybe I'll find a way to get back to the surface at the other end, and I can't do that here. So here goes!"

He stepped boldly through the door. The tunnel was walled with stone in the same manner as the excavation he had just left. The arched roof was but a few inches above his head, and the walls on either side were so close that his elbows nearly touched the masonry.

The air was damp and musty, but as his eyes became accustomed to the gloom the youth was confident that he could see a small spot of light on ahead.

Nor was he mistaken. The brightness steadily increased as he advanced, and after three or four minutes of walking he emerged into a sunken court, surrounded on all sides by walls that were still stately even in their decay and ruin. Tall columns supported what had once been the roof of a beautiful colonnade enclosing three sides of the square, while on the fourth the walls, though more plain, were yet imposing.

In the center of the court was a fountain, once glorious with delicate carvings, of which even now there were portions in a fair state of preservation. The pavement, of large, smooth slabs, was warped and uneven, the grass growing rankly in the cracks and seams. And over all there brooded the deathlike stillness of desertion and decay.

The lad glanced about him silently, lost in

wonder and admiration. How came these relics of a long forgotten civilization here in the midst of this great unknown island? Who reared those walls, enduring in defiance of the inroads of numberless years? What manner of men had lived here in the long ago?

A feeling of uneasiness and oppression came over the youth, and he started hastily to cross the court. His footsteps rang out in hollow resonance upon the all-pervading quiet, and awoke the melancholy echoes. A lizard, startled by the unwonted noise from its nap in the sun, slid from its resting place on the edge of the fountain and scuttled away across the grass covered stones.

Harrie glanced furtively around him, and hurried on. A flight of broad steps led up to the level of the floor above. Quickly mounting them, the boy passed between the columns, carved with strange, unfamiliar figures, and found himself in a large rectangular hall. A long line of fluted pillars ran down the center, forming a support for the roof, which had long

since fallen. A tall sapling had forced its way through the paved floor midway of the apartment, its upper branches rising above the mouldering walls. Through the narrow slits which had once served as windows, vines and brambles peered in, nodding companionship to the young tree.

At the farther end of the room a wide, arched door, with imposing side columns, opened into the jungle outside and towards this Harrie hastened, impatient to be away from the desolate stillness of the ruined palace. As he reached the entrance a sound without caused him to halt and listen. Surely footsteps were approaching. With a hasty glance about him, the lad shrank back into the shadow of the big pillar, and waited in breathless silence.

CHAPTER VII.

CAPTURE AND ESCAPE.

The approaching footsteps drew nearer, and presently turned in at the entrance of the hall. Harrie squeezed himself back into his corner as far as possible, awaiting in some anxiety the outcome of this new adventure. The newcomer proved to be an old man in the native dress. His once tall form was bowed with age, and he leaned heavily upon his staff as he advanced with slow, feeble steps down the pavement. Hair and beard were snowy white, falling in long, curling locks upon breast and shoulders, while his entire person was scrupulously clean.

He walked with eyes fixed upon the ground, muttering to himself under his breath, and apparently giving no heed to his surroundings.

The waiting lad gave a sigh of relief as he saw that his presence was unnoticed, and his glance followed the retreating form curiously as it crossed the room and disappeared between the columns at the farther end.

Then Harrie stepped out from his nook and was about to leave the ruin when a sudden impulse came upon him to see where the old fellow was going, and why he had come into the palace. So, turning abruptly, he tip-toed his way back down the hall, and peered through the colonnade into the court beyond.

The native was already on the other side of the sunken area, and was entering a narrow door in the left hand corner of the opposite wall. This face was the one without ornamentation, having simply a broad frieze at the top. The youth waited for a moment, and then he, too, crossed the pavement. On the threshold he paused to glance about the room which opened before him. It resembled the one from which he had just come in size and shape, but the walls were more elaborately decorated, while at his

right, upon a raised platform, was a great canopied throne, upheld by four stone beasts much resembling tigers.

He had time for only the briefest look, as the old man walked straight down the hall to the door at the farther end, through which he vanished. Again Harrie pressed on behind, reaching the open air to find himself in a large square, or plaza, on all sides of which rose ruined walls of more or less imposing build.

One structure, that on the left, seemed to be in a much better state of preservation than the others, and it was towards this that the native made his way. The lad waited until the other had passed inside before he ventured to follow across the grass-grown flagging. The building before him was nearly square, and was crowned by a roof of stone, sloping slightly from the center to the eaves on either side. A row of octagonal pillars extended across the front, while entrance was gained from a recessed porch in their rear.

Here in the half shadow the youth waited an

instant, but all was silent within, and he quietly entered. The interior was in semi-darkness, being lighted by narrow slits high up in the thick walls. But one look revealed the character of the place. It was a temple without a doubt.

On either side there was a row of three huge idols, each carved from a single block of snow white marble. As the lad's eyes became accustomed to the gloom he saw that the gigantic images were in human shape. They were in a kneeling posture, with hands clasped before them, downcast faces, and closed eyes, while upon their heads were great, flaring, scoop-shaped bonnets which gave them a most singular appearance.

Before one of these grotesque forms the native was prostrating himself, mumbling prayers in a subdued monotone. He continued his devotions for some moments and then, rising, advanced to the lower end of the room. Here was a small round altar, beyond which, close up to the wall, stood a much smaller idol. mount-

ed upon a tall pedestal of highly polished black marble, elaborately carved. Before this the old man kneeled, and once more began his form of worship.

Harrie stole silently forward until nearly up with the kneeling figure, and then stepped back of the nearest image, from which hiding place he scanned the god above the worshiper with eager curiosity. This seventh statue was a mere pigmy in comparison with its colossal fellows, being scarcely more than thirty inches in height. It represented a warrior, clad in glittering golden armor, which gleamed with a dull yellow lustre where the rays of the sinking sun, entering the narrow window, shone upon it. One hand was raised aloft, bearing a javelin, as though in the act of hurling.

But it was the eyes which attracted the lad's particular attention. These glowed a deep, fiery red in the waning light, and it seemed to the crouching boy that they were turned directly upon himself. The idea gave him an ill-defined feeling of uneasiness, and he was about to

beat a retreat, when the native rose from his posture of prayer and advanced to the foot of the pedestal on which the idol stood.

This was some five feet in height, its dark surface carved in sunken panels. The huge block did not stand out in the room entirely, as its rear was firmly imbedded in the wall behind. So much Harrie noted at a glance. Then his attention was given wholly to the movements of the old man.

The latter was passing his fingers softly over the face of the stone before him as though in search of something. Presently his hand came to a standstill, and he pressed gently upon a small projecting bit of carving. There was a slight click, followed by a low grating sound, and the panel dropped slowly from view.

By this time the watching youth was so deeply interested in the proceedings that he altogether forgot his need of caution, and tip-toed forward until he could see over the native's shoulder into the cavity which was now exposed to view. The old man seemed totally uncon-

scious of the other's presence, and put his right hand within the aperture. When he withdrew it he grasped a cluster of glittering jewels of marvelous beauty, mounted in a setting of the finest golden filigree.

He held this lovingly before his face for several moments, caressing it gently with the fingers of his left hand, and muttering to himself the while. After some time he returned it to its resting place within the opening, and drew out a second cluster, which rivaled the first in richness. This he replaced in like manner, and then paused with his arm still in the opening, as though hesitating whether to remove more of the precious gems stored there. Harrie was now barely two yards away, and gazing in breathless interest. Suddenly the old fellow withdrew his hand from the treasure-chamber, and whirling quickly around, faced the astonished lad with blazing eyes and a torrent of unintelligible words.

Completely bewildered by this move, for he had supposed himself entirely unnoticed by the

native, the boy shrank back abashed before the other's vehemence. Brandishing his staff with threatening gestures the old man poured forth his volley of abuse in a tongue entirely unknown to his frightened hearer.

Harrie soon recovered his scattered wits, however, and began to edge cautiously away from his assailant, hoping to be able to escape by thus increasing the distance between them. But the native saw his intention and, dropping his staff on the floor, caught the lad roughly by the shoulders, shaking him until his teeth fairly rattled.

In vain Harrie attempted to free himself from that vice-like grip. Turn and twist as he might, his captor retained his hold, manifesting a strength entirely unlooked for in one who appeared so old. At length the struggling youth ceased his efforts, convinced that they were futile, and awaited the next move of the temple guardian.

The latter released his hold with one hand, and, dragging his prisoner by the other, re-

turned to the front of the pedestal, where he touched the spring which closed the treasure chamber. He then picked up his fallen staff, and still gripping the boy tightly, made his way to a door which opened in the rear wall just to the right of the image.

The room which they now entered was long and narrow, lighted only by two small windows, one on either side. In former days it had evidently been a dressing room for the priests of the temple, for a long stone basin stood in one corner, while from a round opening in the wall above there still projected a bit of tiling, showing that in olden times there had been an ample supply of running water.

A square hole opened near the center of the wall at the back of the apartment, close to the floor. It was fitted with a thin shutter of stone, running up and down in a grooved track. Towards this hole the old native dragged his unwilling victim, and forcing him to his knees, shoved him through the opening, pushing down the slide as soon as the boy was inside.

After a moment Harrie cautiously rose to a sitting posture. The darkness was intense, the air damp and musty. As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom he could make out a thin line of light where the shutter met the floor, showing that the former was not entirely closed. No sound came from without, and he concluded that the native had immediately taken his departure.

"This is a pretty pickle," the lad muttered disgustedly. "This is what I get for poking my nose into other people's business. How am I to get out of this hole, I'd like to know?"

He now stood up, raising his arms high above his head, but without reaching the roof. He extended his hands on either side, to find that the walls were not more than five feet apart. He held his arms directly before him, and found that he could touch the stonework there without moving.

"There's evidently no way out except the one by which I came in," Harrie concluded as he finished his investigation. "And how am I to

escape there? Can I push open the slide? And if I can, how do I know that I shall not find some one on guard in the temple?"

He was silent for a moment or two. Then he commenced to think aloud again.

"I wonder where the old priest—I guess he's a priest—came from? Is he alone here, or are there others? I didn't see any signs of natives around anywhere, so there can't be many. Maybe that old chap is the only one left. Wonder what he is going to do with me?

"Who built these buildings anyhow? None of the native tribes that are in the island now, I'm sure. And what the priest said wasn't in any of the dialects we have met so far. It's a queer business from start to finish. I've a mind to try that slide and see if I can open it."

He took his knife from his pocket, opened it, and, bending down close to the narrow thread of light which shone beneath the shutter, inserted the blade in the crack. Then he lifted slowly and carefully. At first there was no movement on the part of the slab, but as he gradually in-

creased the pressure the opening widened, until at length he was able to slip his hands beneath the slide, and exert his full strength. After that it was but a moment before he was outside the opening, and had quietly dropped the shutter into place once more.

Harrie drew a long breath and glanced anxiously about him. The sun was just setting, and the light in the room was dim. No one was to be seen, and no sound came from the temple proper beyond. With a light, noiseless tread the lad crossed the doorway and peered out into the larger apartment. The snowy images shone ghostly white through the thickening shadows, but there were no signs of human occupants.

The youth hesitated. The old priest might be lurking somewhere in the gloom among his idols. Should he venture out at once? Or would it be better to wait a few moments? Not a sound broke the solemn stillness of the place, save his own quick breathing. Slowly the seconds passed and the darkness thickened until

even the giant marble forms became mere patches of white.

At length the boy stole forward, stepping as lightly as possible, but even so, his footfalls seemed to ring out in the quiet with alarming distinctness. He glanced back over his shoulder apprehensively. The golden image upon its pedestal of black marble glimmered faintly in the gloom, while its eyes, blood red, seemed to wink derisively at him.

A great desire to flee in headlong haste came upon the lad, but he resisted, forcing himself to proceed slowly and with caution. At last the portico was reached, and with a long sigh of relief Harrie slipped between the huge stone pillars into the outer air.

Here there was still sufficient light to reveal the surrounding objects clearly. The square was silent and deserted; the tall grass which grew in the cracks and seams of the pavement waved gently to and fro in the evening breeze. The lad could scarce bring himself to believe that his experiences of the last two hours were

real. Was not the old priest a fiction of his imagination after all, some phantom of the past called up by the strange surroundings? Surely no human feet had trod those stones in many long years!

Harrie paused irresolutely, considering what was the best course to pursue. It would soon be dark, and he must hurry if he were to gain the open plain before night came. The safest plan seemed to be to make his way directly to the river, and to follow up its bank. Thus he could be sure he would not go astray.

He knew that the stream lay somewhere in front of him, and no great distance away. After a last hasty glance about him, he struck off across the plaza. Upon its opposite sides were the ruins of two larger structures, and between them he passed. To his surprise a paved roadway led on in the direction of the river. Its massive flagging was warped and cracked, while grass and briers grew above it, but it still afforded a pathway through the jungle.

The youth pressed on at a brisk pace, and

soon saw the open water course on ahead. At the same moment he saw something else which caused him to halt abruptly. It was the form of a man, standing at the edge of the stream, and silhouetted against the evening sky.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOST TREASURE.

HARRIE'S heart beat quickly with excitement as he made the startling discovery, and he hastily stepped back into the shadow of the trees at the edge of the roadway. Here he remained, gazing at the motionless figure by the riverside. That his own approach had been unheard he was confident, for the man did not turn his head, nor did he in any way give indication that his reverie had been disturbed.

For five minutes the lad waited impatiently; then the dark form turned and came down the path. As he passed by, not ten feet away, Harrie could make out in spite of the darkness the bent figure and snowy locks of the temple guardian. His head was bowed upon his breast, and

the low murmur of his voice came to the youth's ears in the same monotonous mumble that he had noticed earlier in the day.

When the retreating footsteps had died away in the distance Harrie ventured to move forward again, being careful to keep within the sheltering shadows cast by the trees. He reached the river bank in safety, and turned to the north along the shore. The walking was not the best, and he was a half hour in reaching the open plain beyond the forest.

Once there, however, the rest of his trip was quickly made, and inside of another thirty minutes he approached the camp. Here he found his comrades in a state of alarm over his long delayed arrival, and they greeted him with a flood of interrogatives.

"Give me time," was his good natured protest, "and I will tell you everything. But I can't answer all your questions at once. Besides I'm as hungry as a rhinocerous."

Not until he had eaten his supper would he satisfy their eager curiosity. Then, with his ap-

petite appeased, he gave a full account of the afternoon's experiences, much to the amazement of his little audience. Their exclamations of surprise were many, and, as he finished Dr. Thornton said:

"You are not joking, are you, my son? Your story hardly seems credible."

"I know it, father," the boy answered earnestly. "And I don't in the least blame you for doubting it. But I'm in sober earnest, and it is true, every word."

The physician shook his head doubtfully. "I can't understand it at all," he remarked. "I never heard of the existence of any such ruins in the island. In fact, I did not suppose that a civilized race had ever had its home here."

"But the interior has not been explored to any extent, has it?" Leigh inquired.

"No. Only a few Europeans have penetrated to any distance from the coast," the gentleman replied. "And to the best of my knowedge no one has ever been in this section before."

"Then Harrie has made a very important dis-

covery," cried Mildred. "Perhaps it will make him famous when he returns to America."

"Harrie hasn't returned to America yet, and may never arrive there," the boy said drily. "So I'm afraid that his fame isn't very secure just at present."

"But the old priest's presence is more inexplicable than the ruins themselves," Dr. Thornton resumed. "He can hardly belong to the race which built the great structures, for it must be ages since they passed away. Yet how one of another tribe came to be acquainted with the secrets of the temple I cannot well make out."

"Could it not be possible that the nation had gradually become extinct, and that he is the last surviving member?" questioned Harrie. "He must be a man of eighty or more. Perhaps when he was born there were still a few families left of the old race."

"That is possible," his father assented. "And until we have been able to learn more about the matter it is the explanation for us to adopt. You

are positive that there are no other natives in the old city?"

"I am not positive," was the response, "but I hardly think there are others. I saw no indications of their presence there."

"Will you go to see the ruins yourself?" Leigh now inquired.

"I hardly know what to say about that," the physician replied, thoughtfully. "I should like very much to do so, but I am not sure that it is quite safe. We must risk no further encounters with the natives."

"I can see no great danger," Harrie put in. "Even should the old priest have comrades they must be few in numbers. Had there been a village there it seems to me that the inhabitants would have made their presence known long before this. I believe it will be safe for us to visit the town in a body."

"If only I were able to go with you," Leigh remarked regretfully. "I shall be very sorry to miss such a sight."

"You will have an opportunity before we

leave the valley," his friend said comfortingly. "For we must go close by in continuing our journey down the river."

"That's so, isn't it?" the lad returned more cheerfully. "And, by the way, this will explain how your yam plantation originated."

"So it does," Dr. Thornton assented. "But we will not decide this question to-night. It is already time we were in bed. To-morrow we will consider the matter further."

The next morning at breakfast the subject again came up, and after some discussion it was decided that the physician, Harrie and Semessi should visit the ruins that day. Leigh offered to remain alone at the camp, but the gentleman thought it best that Mildred should run no risks. Later on, if all went well, she, too, could make the trip.

Immediately after the noon meal had been eaten the trio set forth on their expedition. They followed the river shore until they reached the overgrown street leading back to the abandoned town. Not a person was to be seen, nor

was there the slightest indication of the presence of natives in the vicinity.

They reached the deserted square unmolested, and paused for the physician to inspect the surrounding walls. The strong sunlight revealed the ravages of time as the twilight of the previous afternoon had not done, but still the plaza, with its temple, palace and lesser buildings presented an imposing spectacle.

Dr. Thornton stood for some moments lost in admiration. Then he turned to the lad, saying:

"It is wonderful, wonderful! I can not understand it! But lead on to the scene of your adventures."

"We will go first to the palace," Harrie remarked as he started toward the structure. "And I will show you the tunnel by which I entered."

Passing between the lofty columns which adorned the arched entrance, the party advanced down the throne room, the gentleman halting at the farther end to inspect the four stone beasts which upheld the royal seat. They

then continued their way to the sunken court, where Harrie pointed out the door of the subterranean passage by which he had gained access to the regal dwelling.

The large hall in which the boy had first seen the old priest was next visited. Returning again to the court yard they explored in turn the wings on either hand, which the lad had not entered the previous day. They were found to contain a large number of smaller rooms, evidently the residential portion of the great building.

When this investigation was over the trio emerged from the eastern wing by a door which led into the jungle on the side farthest from the river. Through the tangle of undergrowth there could be seen here and there solitary columns, ruined arches, bits of overgrown masonry, and other numerous evidences of the extensive town which had once surrounded the central plaza.

After a brief glance about them the party were turning to walk around the palace walls

to the square, when Harrie noticed a narrow footpath leading off to the northeast. He called his father's attention to the well-worn trail, and urged that they follow it. The Doctor agreed and they set out in single file. They had gone but a few rods when a sharp turn to the right brought them to a small stone hut standing in the midst of a tiny garden plot.

Halting in some surprise, the trio sought earnestly for signs of life about the cottage, but no one was stirring. Presently Harrie exclaimed under his breath:

"This must be where the old priest lives! I wonder if he is at home?"

Neither of his comrades could answer the question, and after a little hesitation they advanced cautiously and peered in through the open doorway. The interior was clean and inviting. A small cot stood in one corner, a rude table occupied the center, and a few wooden stools, dark with age and use, were scattered about. A primitive fire-place with a stone chimney was the most interesting feature of the

room, and called forth a low exclamation from the physician. Above the hearth were two or three stone shelves on which reposed a number of earthen and metal dishes of curious shapes.

The trio gazed long and earnestly. At length, as they turned away Dr. Thornton remarked thoughtfully:

"We have had a rare privilege—that of looking upon the interior of a pre-historic dwelling. And it has shown that the men who erected these buildings years ago were far more advanced in civilization than I had supposed, even after seeing the ruins yonder. It is all very wonderful."

The party retraced their steps down the footpath, which led them to the plaza, emerging between the temple and the palace. The lad now conducted his companions within the sacred portals to the dim silence beyond. At first they believed themselves to be alone in the apartment, and gave their attention to the inspection of the singular images on either side. But as they reached the lower end of the room Harrie saw a figure lying upon the pavement beyond the altar,

and just before the black marble pedestal of the warrior god.

Springing quickly forward, he saw the body of the aged priest lying prone upon the floor, his breast pierced by a golden javelin. His cry of horror brought his father to his side, and, kneeling down, the physician made a hasty examination of the prostrate form.

"He has been dead for some hours," was his announcement as he rose to his feet.

"Who could have done it?" queried the lad in an awed tone.

Dr. Thornton shook his head.

"I do not see how it happened," he said. "I should certainly have said there were no other natives about."

"Can it be that he committed suicide?" Harrie asked.

"I hardly think so, to judge from the position of the weapon," was the reply.

The youth looked at the image above him. As he did so he gave an involuntary cry of astonishment. The spear which had been in the hand

of the god on the previous evening was no longer there. A quick glance at the weapon in the old man's body convinced the lad that it was the missing one. In a few brief sentences he explained this fact to his father.

"That only adds to the mystery," was the latter's puzzled comment. "How came the murderer of the priest by the javelin? I confess I am all at sea."

"We must not leave the corpse here; why not place it in the little closet where I was imprisoned?" suggested the boy. "It will answer nicely for a tomb."

"Very well," assented the gentleman.

They raised the dead man tenderly in their arms and bore him to the inner room. The slide was open, giving evidence that the priest had discovered Harrie's escape. Before placing the body within its strange grave it was necessary to remove the spear. Then the stone shutter was tightly closed and wedged in place, after which they returned to the temple proper.

"I wonder if I can find the spring which opens

the treasure chamber?" Harrie remarked when they once more stood before the idol. "Let me see."

He passed his hands slowly over the raised work at the right side of the pedestal, as he had seen the native do, pressing each projecting knob which seemed likely to release the hidden spring. When about half way down the block one of the tiny points yielded to the boy's touch, and he cried exultingly:

"I have it! I have it!"

But the panel did not move. Instead the upraised arm of the god shot suddenly forward, as though launching an imaginary weapon. The Americans gazed in bewilderment for an instant. Then as the arm returned to its former position, Dr. Thornton exclaimed:

"It is all clear now! That explains the manner of the priest's death. He touched this spring by mistake and the idol flung the spear which ended his life."

"What a strange fate!" said Harrie. "To be slain by the same god whom he was trying to

serve. It is right in keeping with the rest of the singular affair!" and he glanced up at the golden image, whose deep red eyes seemed to wink derisively at him.

After a moment he turned again to the pedestal and continued his search for the other spring. He was not long in finding it, not far from the one he had already discovered. At his touch the panel dropped slowly from view. The cavity within was dark, and Harrie thrust his hands inside, moving his fingers carefully over the floor and walls. Presently he withdrew his arm and said with a queer look on his face:

"There are no jewels there! The treasure chamber is empty!"

CHAPTER IX.

A FATAL MISTAKE.

Dr. Thornton received his son's announcement quietly. There had been so many surprising developments already that he was prepared for almost anything which might happen. So he merely nodded his head as the lad went on:

"The old priest, when he discovered my escape, must have removed the jewels immediately. But then why did he return here and so meet his death? I had supposed that he was trying to remove the treasure when he touched the wrong spring."

"Possibly he was aware of its existence, and purposely took that way of ending his life," suggested his father.

"Or he may have removed the jewels and se-

creted them in his clothing, and then, in endeavoring to close the panel, he may have made the mistake which cost him his life," the youth went on.

"Your explanation is a plausible one," the physician assented. "It could, moreover, be easily verified by examining the body. But I do not care to make such an investigation.

"No indeed," Harrie rejoined decidedly. "Let the treasure go. I should always fear some disaster if it were in our possession. And it really makes little difference how the old man met his death—whether intentionally or by accident. We can be pretty sure that no one but himself is responsible."

During all this time Semessi had remained standing silent and motionless in the center of the temple. Now, however, he stepped forward and remarked in a low tone:

"Day most gone. Better go back camp."

Dr. Thornton took out his watch and glanced quickly at it.

"You are right," he said as he returned the time-piece to his pocket. "It will soon be sundown. We cannot remain here longer. Come Harrie," and he led the way from the building.

The walk back to camp was a silent one. Both the lad and his father had been deeply stirred by the scenes of the afternoon, and were in no mood for conversation. A dull feeling of gloom and danger had settled upon them, which they could not throw off. As for the chief, he was habitually taciturn.

They reached the hut just at dusk to find the evening meal in readiness, and as they gathered in a circle about the fire to partake of the savory food the physician gave an account of their experiences.

"So you lost the treasure after all," remarked Leigh, who had been brought from his couch in the hut, as the gentleman closed his recital. "It is too bad, and yet as you say, I don't believe I should care to have the jewels around, even if I knew where to find them."

"How strange the whole affair has been," was

Mildred's comment. "From the very first glimpse that Harrie had of the ruins until this afternoon, everything has been unusual and unaccountable. It is almost uncanny."

"That just expresses the feeling that I have had myself," the youth declared. "It has seemed uncanny—unreal."

With that the conversation turned to other matters. But it was often referred to during the following weeks. The days passed very quietly and uneventfully for the most part. The hunting trips were resumed, and baskets were made for the carrying of the growing store of dried meat when the journey should be continued.

Leigh steadily gained strength, and at the end of the seventh week he was able to hobble about the camp with the aid of two canes which Harrie had cut for him in the grove. Dr. Thornton declared however that he must wait at least three weeks more before it would be safe for him to attempt the hard walking which their march would entail.

One morning about the middle of the eighth week Semessi was missing when the other members of the party awoke. At first they thought litle of his absence, believing that he had risen early in order to visit his snares across the river. But as time passed and he did not return, they became anxious. Breakfast was eaten without the chief, and his comrades went about their various tasks.

Not until the forenoon was well advanced did he put in an appearance. Then he walked quietly up to the hut and asked for something to eat. In reply to the eager questions of the lads as to where he had been he said briefly:

"Went down river. Got canoe."

"You went down the river and got a canoe!" cried Harrie incredulously. "When did you start, pray?"

"Last night, after all 'sleep," was the reply.

And nothing further could be ascertained from him until after he had eaten. When at length his hunger had been satisfied the physician turned to Mildred, saying:

"Find out where he has been and his object in going, please. It will be a much quicker way than for him to tell us his story in English."

The girl readily assented, and a conversation of some length in the native tongue ensued. At its close Mildred briefly informed her companions of the main facts in the old chief's narrative.

"Last evening, after we had all gone to bed," she began, "Semessi rose and went to the river. There he secured a log, and sitting astride of it, he set out down the stream on a scouting trip. He went seven or eight miles without finding any trace of natives. Then he came to a large village built out in the stream.

"Leaving his log, he swam in around the houses. All the villagers were asleep and not even the dogs noticed his coming. He inspected a number of canoes, and selected one which he thought would serve us in continuing our voyage. This he loosed from its fastenings, and pushed before him until he was well out into the

river. Then he clambered on board and paddled back up stream. The boat was so large that his progress was slow, and therefore it was not until a short time ago that he reached the shore opposite the camp."

"What suggested the idea to him?" inquired Dr. Thornton.

"He said he knew that Leigh would never be able to stand the rough walking with his injured limb, and so thought that he would try to obtain a canoe," the girl explained.

"It was certainly very thoughtful," said the gentleman, "and while I do not as a usual thing approve of appropriating another man's property without his consent, I think that under these circumstances the act was justifiable." And turning to the chief he thanked him heartily.

"Let us go and see the canoe," suggested Leigh eagerly. "Is it a large one, Semessi?"

"Come and see," was the laconic answer.

The entire party accordingly made their way to the river bank, where they found the boat,

moored in a clump of overhanging bushes. It proved to be much larger than the one they had lost, and well suited to their wants. It was supplied, moreover, with four paddles, a fact which the physician noted with satisfaction.

"It is just the thing," he declared, "and renders the remainder of our trip easy and pleasant. Then, too, it will lessen the time nearly one half."

"How soon will you start?" asked Harrie.

"Tomorrow," was the prompt response. "There is no longer any reason for delay."

"Will you travel by day or at night?" queried the other lad.

"We will be obliged to start after dark, in order to pass the village in safety," Dr. Thornton made answer. "Later on we may find it possible to do our voyaging during the day."

The rest of the day was filled with the bustle of preparation. The supplies of smoked flesh and fish were overhauled and packed in the baskets which had been made for the purpose. A fresh supply of yams was obtained from the

plantation which had furnished them during the stay at the camp, and other necessary arrangements were made. Night found the party still at work, and not until darkness fell did their labors cease. Early the next morning they were at it again and by noon the little craft was in readiness for the long voyage to the sea.

When the midday meal had been eaten, the last at the hut which had for nearly two months been a pleasant home to the wanderers, they embarked in the canoe, and pushed out into the stream. The reason for this early start was the desire of Leigh and Mildred to visit the ruined city before they left the valley.

When, therefore, the boat was opposite the end of the paved roadway, it was brought inshore and made fast to the bank. Semessi remained on guard while his comrades made their tour of the ancient town. Until sundown they wandered among the deserted halls, inspecting with eager curiosity these decaying monuments of a vanished race.

At length they returned to the canoe, and the

evening meal was prepared and eaten on shore. Not until darkness had completely enshrouded the valley in its folds was the advance resumed. Urged on by the combined power of current and paddles, the little craft made good speed, and the miles were rapidly left behind. Before midnight the native village was reached and passed in safety, and returning day found the voyagers far from their former camp.

For two weeks the voyage continued without interruption. The party traveled almost entirely by night, keeping well out in the stream, and while their progress was not so great as if they had been able to take advantage of the daylight hours, yet the difference was more than offset by the feeling of security which they gained.

Once only were they in danger of discovery by the tribesmen. This was when they had been about ten days on their cruise. As dawn came on the canoe was directed into a little cove which opened upon the right, and there snugly concealed beneath the thick foliage which hung

over the bank. The party themselves made their camp in a glade near by. When the morning meal had been disposed of all except Harrie lay down for their usual rest.

The lad was walking up and down the tiny opening, endeavoring in this way to keep himself awake, for he was very sleepy, when he thought he heard the sound of voices in the distance. He paused in his march and listened intently. He had not been mistaken; there was some one not far away. Obeying a sudden unaccountable impulse he threw himself noiselessly upon the ground.

The voices came nearer, and presently a band of natives filed by not three rods away from the prostrate youth. When they were well out of hearing Harrie crept forward to the edge of the intervening thicket and peered through. To his consternation there was a well defined trail leading off in either direction through the bush. Having ascertained this fact, the boy hurriedly awoke his companions and acquainted them with the danger.

What to do was the question. To remain where they were was to risk discovery, for had the campers been moving about the clearing the natives would surely have noticed their presence. Yet to venture out on the river with the tribesmen in the near vicinity would be to invite an attack.

It was at length decided to retire to the canoe and pass the remainder of the day in it, trusting to the dense foliage to conceal them from chance passers-by. Accordingly this plan was carrried out, and fortunately for the travelers it proved successful. But it was with a great feeling of relief that they took their departure from the dangerous locality that evening.

They now began to feel the influence of the tides on the river current, and this at times became an added hindrance to their advance. Their night voyages, the caution they were obliged to exercise, and finally the tides, all combined to delay their progress towards the coast. But since they were well supplied with food, the wanderers were content so long as they escaped

any conflict with the various tribes along the route.

As they drew nearer the sea the party found a new danger confronting them, and one which rendered their situation most unpleasant. This lay in the crocodiles with which the river swarmed, and ugly looking creatures they were with their great, ungainly bodies, long tails and hideous snouts.

More than once they approached uncomfortably close to the canoe, as though to investigate the bold invaders of their allotted realm, and on one occasion a big fellow came near upsetting the craft in his curiosity to find out what was inside. In the darkness their rough bodies floating on the surface could with difficulty be distinguished from drifting timber, and the voyagers were careful to give all such objects a wide berth. Yet they were destined to have an encounter with the saurians in spite of their endeavors.

It happened on the sixteenth day after leaving the valley. Dawn was at hand, and the

party, as was their custom, had sought a refuge on shore. Barely had the canoe touched the beach when Semessi leaped out, and leaving his comrades to draw the craft up out of reach of the waves, started along the margin of the forest in search of the fuel for their fire. Noticing what, in the dim morning light, appeared to be a prostrate tree trunk he hastened towards it, thinking to find near it the smaller wood for which he was seeking.

Not until he was almost upon the dark mass did he discover his mistake. Then he realized too late that the seeming log was an immense crocodile, which had been lying in wait for its prey. It now turned and rushed savagely at the chief, who in his terrrified flight stumbled and fell before he had taken a half dozen steps.

CHAPTER X.

DARK DAYS.

Before Semessi could regain his feet the crocodile was upon him, and, seizing one of the chief's legs in his huge jaws, dragged him toward the river. But he was not to carry off his prey unhindered. Dr. Thornton and the lads had seen their comrade's danger, and now came to his aid.

Unarmed as they were, except for the light bows and arrows, which were scarcely better than nothing against the rough armor-like skin of the reptile, they hastened to the attack. By the time they reached the scene the crocodile had nearly gained the water. Not a moment was to be lost, for once the animal was within its native element all hope would be gone.

It was Harrie who, with his usual promptness of thought and action, rushed in between the monster and the river with loud cries, thus intercepting its advance. He realized that so long as he kept beyond the reach of its tail he was safe, for its mouth was fast closed upon the limb of the hapless victim.

The latter, notwithstanding the intense pain which he was suffering, retained his presence of mind, and now, as his captor turned aside to avoid the shouting youth, he called out quickly:

"Shoot for eye! shoot for eye!"

Instantly the lad divined Semessi's meaning, and raised the bow which he held in his hand, already strung. Taking aim hastily, he fired. The crocodile made a sudden lunge forward just as he did so, and the arrow rattled harmlessly against its mailed skin. Again Harrie fitted a shaft to his bow, and stepping close up to the hideous head, let drive. Straight into the eye socket the weapon sped, and, with a hoarse bellow of rage, the reptile, releasing its hold upon

the chief, plunged blindly forward toward the water, now but a few feet away.

As he went he lashed furiously to right and left with his powerful tail, striking Dr. Thornton a blow which sent him spinning across the beach, to land in a confused heap at the edge of the forest. Meanwhile Harrie had seized Semessi, and dragged him out of the way.

But the battle was over. The crocodile, evidently deeming its enemies too numerous for a successful struggle, disappeared in the stream, and was not seen again. The physician picked himself up, well shaken and considerably bruised, but otherwise uninjured by his unexpected tumble, and came forward to care for the wounded chief.

The latter had lapsed into unconciousness, and Dr. Thornton shook his head gravely as he kneeled beside the apparently lifeless form. The right leg was frightfully mangled just above the knee, where it had been crunched between the powerful jaws of the saurian, and the blood was

pouring from the hurt in a stream which dyed the ground a deep red.

The gentleman issued a few rapid orders, and worked heroically to stop the bleeding. But with the scanty resources at hand he was unable to accomplish his purpose. At length he looked up at his helpers and announced sadly:

"I can do no more. He has already lost so much blood that recovery would be doubtful even had I the best of medical appliances at hand. As it is all we can do now is to make the sufferer as comfortable as possible until the end comes."

Silently and with grief stricken faces the little party moved about, ministering to the dying chief. In their long, perilous journey from the mountain fastness they had come to know the loyal heart which beat within the dusky form, and to cherish a deep regard and love for the old man who had proven himself so faithful a friend.

To Mildred especially was the blow a trying one. Since early childhood Semessi had stood

in a father's place to the young girl, loving her more than life itself. And now he was the last tie which bound her to the old life. Who could tell what the new one opening before her would bring? Would she find her own parent in the far away America, or would she, too, perish by the way, as Koloka had done, and as the chief was so soon to do?

At intervals the patient regained consciousness, and at such times his glance invariably sought for the face of the young maid, to whom he murmured low toned sentences in the native tongue. Then he would again become insensible to his surroundings and lie as one dead, with only the faint flutterings of his pulse to show that he still lived.

As the morning wore away the dying man became weaker and weaker. For a long time he lay motionless, without opening his eyes. Just as the sun reached the meridian he roused again, and, with a last fond smile of farewell to Mildred, the loyal loving spirit left its earthly dwelling forever.

The grief of the little band was deep and real, but circumstances demanded that it be put aside in order that their own safety should have immediate attention. Quietly but speedily the last sad rites were performed, and the body was laid to rest in a grave just within the edge of the forest.

It was mid-afternoon when the wanderers turned mournfully away from the low mound, and no food had passed their lips since the previous evening. Therefore a meal was hastily prepared, and all forced themselves to partake of the nourishment for which they had no desire. Then, with hearts heavy and sore, they set forth once more on their sorrowful way.

The next morning found them unable to make a landing because of the swampy nature of the shores upon either side of the river. Dense thickets of mangroves grew in the marshy soil, their roots reaching far out into the water, while their drooping branches dipped in the stream. This compelled the voyagers to continue their advance during the day, a fact which gave them

some little uneasiness. Fortunately, however, no natives were met with.

Another disaster befell the travelers which for a time assumed a most serious aspect. The supplies of smoked fish and game which they had brought with them, in this later stage of their journey, under the action of the heat and the humid air of the river, became unfit for food, while the water of the stream was so brackish as to be altogether unpalatable. Thus left without food and drink, and unable to go on shore in search of either, their condition was indeed a hard one.

Upon the second day Leigh made a discovery which in a measure relieved this situation. As the canoe was proceeding at a slow rate not far from the overhanging mangrove boughs the lad noticed that their tips, where they touched the water, seemed to be encrusted with a dingy white growth. He called the attention of his comrades to the fact, and the boat was brought in nearer for a better view. Then they saw that the strange looking bunches were in reality clus-

ters of small oysters clinging to the submerged twigs.

Harrie promptly tested their food properties, and pronounced them excellent. It took but a short time to gather a quantity of the bivalves sufficient to furnish a number of meals for the entire party, and much encouraged by this unexpected relief they pushed on with renewed vigor.

Shortly after noon the canoe emerged from the river into a large bay. On either hand the shore stretched away in a curve of glistening white. Near at hand the coast was low and flat, but in the distance a range of wooded hills was to be seen. The bay widened before them, its broad expanse dotted with numerous islands, some mere patches of gleaming sand, others larger and covered with the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics. A light breeze ruffled the surface of the water into tiny, white-capped waves, while over all the sun poured his brilliant rays.

"At last our long journey is over," Leigh

cried exultingly. "We have done what no other living persons have done—crossed New Guinea."

"I'm not at all sure that our journey is over, by a good deal," objected Harrie. "Though I'll admit the truth of your last statement without dispute."

"Well, the hardest part of the trip is past," the first speaker contended stoutly, "and that is what I meant. It can't take such a very great length of time for us to find some settlement now that we have reached the coast."

"We certainly have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the fact that we have succeeded in reaching the southern shores of the island," interposed Dr. Thornton. "But we must not forget that there are still long miles between us and safety."

"You see," he went on after a moment, "while the settlements along this coast are much more numerous than on the north, yet they are many miles apart. Then, again, the native population is much larger here than there, so that we

run a greater risk of an encounter with them."

"Whew!" ejaculated Leigh. "I guess I was a trifle over-confident, wasn't I? But it does seem good to see the ocean once more."

"Which way will you go now?" Mildred inquired.

"That is just what I can not decide," the gentleman returned frankly. "We know so little of our real location, that it makes the problem a difficult one. We must be well to the westward, however, and there would seem to be better chances of reaching some trading station by keeping to the east. But I should like the opinion of the rest of you on the subject."

"I guess we haven't any," said Harrie with a short laugh. "I'm sure that I haven't much idea as to where we are, or which way we ought to go. I'm more nearly lost here than when we were in the interior. Then I knew that we must come to the south. Now I don't know which way to turn."

"The same here," his friend joined in. "We will have to leave it entirely to you, Doctor.

You go ahead, and we will accept your plans."

"Very well, then," responded the physician. "We will go to the east. And I trust that we shall not run in with any warlike natives along our way."

In accordance with this decision the canoe was turned and the party proceeded along the shore with their backs to the setting sun. While the waves were not large, they tossed the rude craft about in a most unceremonious way. The current was also strong, and so their advance was not at a satisfactory rate. They had barely rounded the headland which marked the eastern limit of the bay, when the darkness was upon them.

The water, too, was rougher here than within the harbor, and the travelers were soon glad to turn their bow towards the beach, intending to go ashore for the night. As they drew near the tossing line of surf, however, their hearts failed them. Would their frail canoe stand the battering it would receive in the passage? It seemed doubtful.

There was nothing to be done but to go on, and summoning what courage they possessed the party awaited the outcome of the venture. The boat reached the foaming surf, and was soon bobbing and plunging wildly in the seething waters. Wave after wave came dashing after them, threatening to overwhelm them in the onward sweep, but still the canoe remained upright.

They were already nearing the beach, when a billow larger than any of its predecessors came rushing landward. It caught the craft in its powerful grasp, overturning it completely, and rolling the passengers high up on the sands.

Breathless and gasping they struggled to their feet, simply to be bowled over by the next inrush of water. A second and a third time they went down beneath the resistless sweep of the waves, but at length they emerged, and made their way to a place of safety beyond the reach of the tide.

When they had somewhat recovered themselves the castaways glanced about in search of

the canoe. Its broken and battered fragments were tossing amid the foam, damaged beyond repair. Nor was this their only loss. Bows, arrows, the few yams still remaining to them, all were gone.

It was a discouraged and disheartened party that took shelter under a hastily constructed windbreak for the night. Without food, without fire, possessing no weapons with which to secure game, miles from the nearest settlement, their position semed as hopeless as it well could be.

The miserable hours dragged themselves away, and morning came at last, clear and beautiful. But the castaways were in no mood to appreciate the glories of nature. They were nearer to despair than ever they had been before in all their long chain of perilous experiences. Especially was this true of Mildred, who had kept up a cheerful courage in spite of the many unpleasant situations in which she had been placed. Now she seemed to lose all interest in their struggle for deliverance, appearing

listless and unresponsive to the efforts the lads made to turn her attention toward the brighter side of the picture.

Dr. Thornton watched the young girl with growing anxiety, as during the day they toiled along the burning sands towards the east, with frequent pauses for rest in the shade of the forest which lined the shore. The heat was intense, and the glare from the glistening beach was most trying to the eyes. Faint with hunger and thirst the band pressed on, hoping against hope, gazing ahead with eager eyes, as they rounded each turn in the shore, for signs of the settlement which never appeared.

For two days the advance continued, the only food secured being a few shell fish and a couple of small birds which the lads brought down with stones. The latter were eaten raw, as their last match had been used some time before. As the second afternoon drew to a close the pace became slower and slower until it seemed as though the wanderers barely moved over the baking sands.

The long, white curve of the beach reeled dizzily before their blood-shot eyes in the shimmering heat, and their lips were black and cracking from thirst. At length Mildred stumbled and fell. Her companions were at her side in an instant, their own misery forgotten for the moment in their anxiety for the maiden, who lay moaning feebly.

Tenderly the lads raised her slight form, themselves so weakened as to stagger under the small weight, and bore it to the shadow of the forest. Then they brought sea water and bathed her face and neck until presently the closed eyes opened once more.

Any further advance was out of the question for that day, and the party made themselves as comfortable as possible. But the rest brought little change in their physical condition save an added loss of strength, and morning found Mildred unable to continue the journey. A thorough search of the immediate neighborhood failed to reveal any water except the salt sea before them, and there seemed to be nothing for

them but to remain where they were until death should end their sufferings. As they sat gazing listlessly out over the sunlit ocean, Harrie jumped suddenly to his feet with a loud cry of hope.

"A sail! a sail!" he cried. "I see a sail!"

CHAPTER XI.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

Dr. Thornton and Leigh sprang quickly to their feet as Harrie's joyous cry rang out, and even Mildred roused enough to inquire eagerly:

"Oh, are you sure? Where is it?"

"Yes, I am sure," the lad returned excitedly. "See, yonder it is, out there by the reef."

He was right. A quarter of a mile from the beach a long, heaving line of surf marked the location of a coral reef, and in the narrow passage at one end of this barrier the castaways saw a small two-masted lugger, making in towards the shore. No sooner were they certain that the vessel was not a delusion of their fevered brains than all three ran down upon the strand, shouting aloud for help.

Their voices were harsh and cracked from thirst, and feeble from their weakened condition, but for all that they managed to make sufficient noise to attract the attention of the crew of the lugger, which presently came up into the wind, and let go her anchor, while a small boat containing two men put off from her side.

As the oncoming craft drew near the Americans saw to their disappointment that the occupants were natives and not of their own race as they had hoped. The rowers were dressed, however, in a civilized costume, or what was intended as such, so that the castaways did not entirely lose heart.

The newcomers, for their part, regarded the little party with glances of the greatest amazement, which were not altogether unwarranted. For they were truly a strange and pitiful sight. Their clothing was in tatters from its many rough encounters with thickets and briars; their hair was long and matted; the physician's beard had grown to formidable proportions; their

faces were dark from continual exposure; while their forms were gaunt and wasted from their terrible privations.

The boat came to a stop just off shore, and one of the oarsmen called out in broken English:

"Who you? What you want?"

"We are castaways," Dr. Thornton returned quickly, "and have been for some days without food or drink. We desire to be carried to some trading station. Can you take us to such a place?"

"What you pay?" came the counter query.

"Whatever you wish, when we reach a settlement," was the prompt response.

The men consulted to gether for a moment or two, and then the one who had acted as spokesman asked still another question:

"You give twenty pound?"

"Yes, gladly, just as soon as we arrive at our destination," the physician hastened to assure him.

"All right," and with the words the boat was

skillfully brought to land just before the waiting Americans. The natives jumped out, swung their craft around until its bow was headed outward, and held it while one by one the castaways took their place on board. Then they shoved off and pulled for the lugger.

The brief trip was made in silence, and the party were soon on the vessel's deck, where they found the rest of the crew, two brown-skinned Malays, awaiting their coming. A disagreeable, fishy smell pervaded the air, which they learned later was due to the cargo of pearl oysters with which the hold was filled.

Food and water were brought, and under the direction of the physician they partook of their first meal. He would allow them to eat only a very small amount at first, but after a short interval the repast was repeated, and this was continued until their weakened stomachs became in a measure accustomed to receiving nourishment once more.

Upon making some inquiries Dr. Thornton found that the vessel was in the pearl fishing

trade, with headquarters at Thursday Island, Torres Strait. The native diver was in command, with a crew composed of one South Sea Islander and two Malays. They had been out for ten days, and were nearly ready to begin their return voyage, having stopped at the reef to secure the small amount of shells necessary to complete their usual cargo.

The quarters on the little craft were none too desirable, but after their long series of hardships the wanderers were not disposed to be over critical. The sea air did much to aid them in regaining their lost strength, and when, five days later, they arrived at Thursday Island, they hardly seemed the same persons who had been so near to death on the New Guinea coast.

They found that the town consisted of one long street, lined for the most part with stores and low groggeries, from which a noisy, drunken crowd of whites and natives issued into the thoroughfare. The houses of the residents were scattered about the numerous islands,

large and small, which were visible in every direction.

A visit to the police magistrate resulted in a hearty welcome from the official, who listened in amazement to their lengthy narrative, and did all in his power to render their stay pleasant and enjoyable. He insisted that they should make his dwelling their home, and kindly advanced the funds necessary for paying their passage in the lugger.

He told them that not only was the settlement the headquarters of the Torres Strait Pearl fisheries, but that it was under the jurisdiction of the Colony of Queensland, and was also a regular port of call for a number of steamship lines plying between Australian ports and points on the coast of Asia.

From him, too, they learned more of the pearl fishing trade.

"Yes, there is quite a profit in the business," he said in answer to Dr. Thornton's questionings. "The fishing is done entirely by the native divers, who will not permit a white man to

accompany them. They make use of our diving suits, however. The luggers, of which the one you came in on is a fair sample, go out for cruises of ten days' or two weeks' duration.

"The divers are paid so much per hundred shells and often earn as much as twenty pounds —one hundred dollars in your money—in a single week. They are a drunken, profligate set and squander their earnings in the groggeries here and at Sydney. The shell, after sorting and packing, is sent to London, where it brings from ninety to one hundred and fifty pounds per ton, according to quality. The shell is not so plentiful as formerly, and the profits are not so large."

"Do not the oysters also furnish pearls of great value?" inquired Leigh.

"They are found occasionally," the official returned, "but not so frequently as is generally supposed."

A week's sojourn with the magistrate at his pleasant residence overlooking the town and adjacent islands brought back the lost roses to

Mildred's pale cheeks, and when the party took their departure for Sydney on the morning of the eighth day, all were in the best of health and spirits.

The run down the coast was an uneventful one, and they arrived at the metropolis of New South Wales just in time to catch the steamer for San Francisco. The long journey across the Pacific came to an end at last, and when the shores of the American continent were sighted late one afternoon the wanderers began to feel that their hardships were really at an end.

The news of their journey across New Guinea had preceded them, and a throng of friends were awaiting them as the great vessel swung into her dock. Dr. Thornton's sister, who was also his housekeeper, for Harrie's mother had died when the boy was barely two years old, was there to welcome the two whom she had long regarded as dead. Leigh's parents were there with warm greetings for the son whom they had feared never to see again. The reporters were also in evidence, eager to receive

the story direct from the lips of the travelers themselves.

But the physician put the representatives of the press aside, and the two re-united families were driven hastily to the palatial home of the specialist, hoping there to escape further interruption. Barely were they seated in the library, however, before there came a fierce ring at the door bell. Dr. Thornton himself answered the summons, to be confronted by a tall, slender man, with hair prematurely grey, and a weary, hungry look in his deep set eyes. He caught the gentleman by the arm, and thrust a newspaper into his face crying hoarsely:

"Tell me, is that true? Is it true?"

Decidedly taken aback at this greeting the physician glanced at the page before him to see, set off with flaring headlines, a long account of his own trip across the great island, closing with the statement that the travelers had met with and released a young American girl who had been held a prisoner by one of the inland tribes.

"Is that true?" demanded the stranger,

fiercely, when he saw that his host had read the item, "tell me quick!"

"Why, yes," Dr. Thornton assented, "though I don't see how the reporters got hold of it."

"And the girl's name?" pressed the man anxiously. "What was the name?"

"Mildred Raynor," said the physician, a light breaking in upon his bewildered brain.

"Thank God! Thank God!" ejaculated his visitor, his face working strongly.

"You are her father?" queried the Doctor, eyeing him keenly.

"I am," came the reply, "and, oh, sir, take me to her at once, I beg of you!"

"Come with me," and Dr. Thornton led the way to the parlor. "Wait here a moment, while I go for Mildred," he commanded.

Then he went to prepare the unsuspecting girl for the interview. That it was a tender one need not be said. How could it be otherwise when the father and daughter, so long separated, were together once more, and both hearts were overflowing with joy?

The lads insisted that Mr. Raynor and Mildred should remain in San Francisco for a number of weeks, to which the physician added a hearty invitation for them to make his home their own. To this arrangement the manufacturer readily assented, and when the parting did come, and the young girl left for her eastern home, it was with the understanding that the friendship begun in the tropic jungles of New Guinea should never be suffered to grow dim.

And of late it has been whispered in several quarters that when Harrie graduates from college, where he is now a staid Senior, he will set up a home of his own in which the chief ornament will be "The Golden Lily" which he found "In the Wilds" during his strange journey "Through the Unknown Isle."

THE END.

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